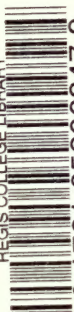


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MEDITATIONS





M. Feuerstein

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THE CRUCIFIXION

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit"—St. Luke xxiii. 46

MEDITATIONS

ON THE
MYSTERIES OF OUR HOLY FAITH
TOGETHER WITH A TREATISE ON MENTAL
PRAYER

BASED ON THE WORK OF THE
VENERABLE FATHER LOUIS DE PONTE, S. J.

BY
REV. C. W. BARRAUD, S. J.

—
VOLUME II
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✠ JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY,
Archbishop of New York.

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CONTENTS

PART IV

OUR LORD'S PASSION

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	11
MEDITATION	
I.—The Passion as a Whole	12
II.—Our Lord Foretells His Passion	14
III.—Christ's Solemn Entry into Jerusalem	17
IV.—The Supper in Bethany	20
V.—Jesus Is Sold	23
VI.—The Eating of the Paschal Lamb	25
VII.—The Washing of the Feet	28
VIII.—Jesus Foretells His Betrayal	30
IX.—Lessons of Humility	33
X.—The Institution of the Holy Eucharist	36
XI.—The Blood of Christ, the Institution of the Holy Eucharist	39
XII.—The Mystery of Faith	41
XIII.—Holy Mass	43
XIV.—Our Lord's Words after the Last Supper	46
XV.—Christ's Prayer to His Father	49
XVI.—Our Lord Leaves the Supper Chamber	51
XVII.—Our Lord's Agony	54
XVIII.—The Sleeping Disciples	56
XIX.—The Traitor	59
XX.—Our Lord Before Annas	62
XXI.—Peter's Fall	65
XXII.—The Condemnation	67

MEDITATION	PAGE
XXIII.—Christ Mocked and Blindfolded	70
XXIV.—The Despair of Judas	72
XXV.—Christ before Pilate	74
XXVI.—Christ before Herod	77
XXVII.—Christ or Barabbas	79
XXVIII.—The Scourging	83
XXIX.—The Crowning with Thorns	84
XXX.—Ecce Homo!	87
XXXI.—The Sentence of Death	89
XXXII.—The Way of the Cross—I	91
XXXIII.—The Way of the Cross—II	94
XXXIV.—Jesus Nailed on the Cross	96
XXXV.—The Title on the Cross	99
XXXVI.—The First Word from the Cross	102
XXXVII.—The Second Word	104
XXXVIII.—The Third Word	106
XXXIX.—The Fourth Word	108
XL.—The Fifth Word	110
XLI.—The Last Two Words	112
XLII.—The Piercing of Christ's Side	116
XLIII.—The Entombment	118
XLIV.—The Three Solitudes	120

PART V

THE UNITIVE WAY

CHRIST'S GLORIFIED LIFE

INTRODUCTION	124
MEDITATION	
I.—The Descent of Christ into Hell	126
II.—The Resurrection	128
III.—Christ and His Mother	130
IV.—The Women at the Sepulchre	131

CONTENTS

vii

MEDITATION

PAGE

v.—Christ and Magdalen	134
vi.—Christ and Peter	136
vii.—On the Way to Emmaus	138
viii.—Christ and the Twelve	140
ix.—Christ and Thomas	143
x.—The Five Wounds of Christ	146
xi.—The Apparition by the Lake	148
xii.—Christ's Commission to Peter	151
xiii.—The Apparition on the Mountain	153
xiv.—The Ascension	155
xv.—The Election of Mathias	157
xvi.—Waiting for the Holy Spirit	159
xvii.—The Coming of the Holy Ghost	163
xviii.—The Early Christians	166
xix.—The Workings of the Holy Ghost	168
xx.—The Gifts of the Holy Ghost	171
xxi.—St. Stephen	173
xxii.—The Conversion of St. Paul—I	175
xxiii.—The Conversion of St. Paul—II	178
xxiv.—The Spirit of St. Paul	181
xxv.—Our Lady's Sojourn on Earth	184
xxvi.—The Blessed Virgin's Death	187
xxvii.—The Assumption	189
xxviii.—Devotion to Our Lady	192

PART VI

THE PERFECTIONS AND BENEFITS OF GOD

INTRODUCTION	195
MEDITATION	
I.—There Is a God	196
II.—God Is Eternal	201
III.—God Infinite and Incomprehensible	203

MEDITATION	PAGE
IV.—God Three in One	205
V.—God Is Good	208
VI.—God Is Merciful	211
VII.—God's Liberality	214
VIII.—God's Immensity and Presence Everywhere .	216
IX.—The Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom of God .	219
X.—God Omnipotent	222
XI.—God's Providence	225
XII.—God's Providence Shown in Hearing Prayer .	228
XIII.—Our Guardian Angel	231
XIV.—Heavenly Joy	234

CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREATS

FOR PRIESTS

CONSIDERATION	
I.—The Dignity of the Christian Priesthood . .	240
II.—Faith, Hope, and Knowledge Required in the Priest	241
III.—Priestly Charity	243
IV.—Priestly Humility	245
V.—Priestly Purity	247
VI.—Punctuality	249
VII.—Prudence	251
VIII.—The Spirit of Reverence	253

CONSIDERATIONS FOR REGULARS

THE THREE VOWS OF RELIGION

CONSIDERATION	
I.—The Excellence of These Vows	255
II.—Their Profitableness	256
III.—The Excellence of Religious Poverty . . .	258
IV.—Its Profitableness	259

CONTENTS

ix

CONSIDERATION	PAGE
v.—The Excellence of Religious Chastity	260
vi.—Its Profitableness	262
vii.—The Excellence of Religious Obedience	263
viii.—Its Profitableness	264

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LAYMEN

CONSIDERATION	
i.—The Blessed Eucharist	266
ii.—Examen and Sacramental Confession	268
iii.—Prayer, Mental and Vocal	269
iv.—Reading, Sermons, and Direction	271
v.—Condition, Duty, Time	272
vi.—Self-Restraint	274
vii.—Mortification	275
viii.—Love of Christ and Its Consequences	277

PRAYERS AND HYMNS FOR COLLOQUIES

AD REGIAS AGNI DAPES	281
AGNUS DEI	282
ALMA REDEMPTORIS	283
ANIMA CHRISTI	284
ANIMA CHRISTI (Cardinal Newman's Translation)	285
DIES IRAE	285
EN EGO	288
GLORIA IN EXCELSIS	288
MAGNIFICAT	289
MEMORARE	290
DE PROFUNDIS (Psalm CXXIX)	290
MISERERE (Psalm L)	291
O DEUS, EGO AMO TE	293
O HOLY JOSEPH	294
PANGE LINGUA	294
PSALM XXV	296

	PAGE
PSALM XLI	297
PSALM XC	298
PSALM CXX	299
SALVE REGINA	300
THE ANGELUS	301
REGINA COELI	302
SLEEP, HOLY BABE	302
STABAT MATER	304
SUME, DOMINE	306
TE DEUM	307
VENI, SANCTE SPIRITUS	308
VEXILLA REGIS	310
VICTIMAE PASCHALI	311
O SALUTARIS HOSTIA	312
THE BENEDICTUS	313
PREPARATORY PRAYER	314
SCHEMES FOR AN EIGHT DAYS' RETREAT	315
SCHEMES FOR A FOUR DAYS' RETREAT	322
ALPHABETICAL INDEX	327

MEDITATIONS

ON THE
MYSTERIES OF OUR HOLY FAITH

PART IV

OUR LORD'S PASSION

INTRODUCTION

CONTRITION, confidence, earnestness, and purity are the dispositions with which we should enter on the contemplation of Christ's passion; contrition, because each one of us can truly say: "I am the cause of all this"; confidence in the great love Christ bears us and in the infinite merit of His sufferings, which He transfers to us; earnestness, not falling asleep with the disciples in the garden, but standing with the blessed Mother at the foot of the cross; and purity, for though it is the blood of Christ that purifies, the cleaner our hearts become the more that precious blood will do for us. Let us pray, then, in the sweet old English of Blessed Thomas More:

"Good Lord, give us Thy grace not to read or hear this gospel of Thy bitter passion with our

eyes and ears in manner of a pastime; but that it may with compassion so sink into our hearts that it may stretch to the everlasting profit of our souls. Amen."

MEDITATION I

THE PASSION AS A WHOLE

Preparatory Prayer.—Grant us, O God our Lord, Thy grace, that all our intentions, actions, and operations may be ordained purely to the service and praise of Thy divine majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

History.—"I lay down My life for My sheep" (*John* x, 15).

Mental Picture.—The scene on Calvary.

Petition.—Sorrow with Christ so full of sorrow, a broken heart with Christ crushed and broken, bitter tears at the thought of what Christ has suffered for me.

FIRST POINT.—Who is He that suffers? 1. The Lamb without spot, "who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 *Pet.* ii. 22), the Holy of Holies, whom His very executioners acknowledge to be holy and the Son of God.

2. That Jesus of Nazareth who "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (*Acts* x. 38). This is the return He

meets with: "They repaid Me evil for good" (*Ps.* xxxiv. 12).

3. The Good Shepherd, the Good Samaritan, the Lover of men.

What did He suffer? Most cruel bodily torture. If your crucifix represented Christ as He really looked you would sicken at the sight; and yet this mangled body is but the title-page to the book of the passion; the anguish of His soul was something far more terrible.

SECOND POINT.—At whose hands did He suffer? At the hands of His own people. "Thy own nation," said Pilate, "and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me. What hast Thou done?" (*John* xviii. 35.) What, indeed? The land was ringing with the miracles of His mercy; yet the entire people rose against Him. "And they shall say to Him: What are these wounds in the midst of Thy hands? And He shall say: With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved Me" (*Zach.* xiii. 6).

For whose sins did He suffer?

For the sins of them who crucified Him, for my sins. "He loved me and delivered Himself for me" (*Gal.* ii. 20).

THIRD POINT.—How did He suffer? 1. With unruffled patience, neither reproaching His persecutors nor defending Himself. "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, He

threatened not; but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly" (1 *Peter* ii. 23). "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He shall not open His mouth" (*Is.* liii. 71).

2. With divine love. "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep" (*John* x. 11). "I have a baptism, where-with I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" (*Luke* xii. 50.) "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself" (*John* x. 17, 18). "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (*Luke* xxiii. 34).

Colloquy with our Good Shepherd. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION II

OUR LORD FORETELLS HIS PASSION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—This He did several times; but just before His death with greater distinctness than ever (*Mark* x).

Mental Picture.—The disciples full of fear, sadness, and perplexity as Our Lord tells them what is to come.

Petition.—Grace to understand the mystery of the cross.

FIRST POINT.—“And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them, and following they were afraid.” The haste our Saviour made on this last journey to Jerusalem shows how eager He was to begin His passion. It filled His apostles with fear because they knew His enemies were waiting for Him. And now He scares them still more by foretelling in detail the sufferings He is to undergo: “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn Him to death and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, and they shall mock Him and spit on Him and scourge Him and kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again.”

You may have seen a picture of the Babe of Bethlehem asleep in the manger, while above His head moves the sad procession in which He is carrying His cross to Calvary. This dream of the Holy Child reminds us of a deep and touching truth. From the first moment of His life all the anguish of His coming passion was present to our Saviour; waking or sleeping He never lost sight of it. He looked forward to it with dread indeed and yet with most earnest longing.

To me the cross is terrible—I can not help that; yet if I love Jesus Christ ever so little I shall try to bear it cheerfully for His dear sake.

“The whole life of Christ was a cross and a

martyrdom, and dost thou seek for thyself rest and joy?" (Á Kempis ii. 12).

SECOND POINT.—But the apostles could not understand. To us it seems wondrous strange that they were so slow to grasp Our Lord's meaning; but two things serve to explain it:

1. He was the Messiah, and the common Jewish idea of the Messiah was that He would be a great temporal prince, sitting on the throne of David, ruling from sea to sea and restoring the lost glories of the chosen people. His death, save at the end of a long and prosperous reign, was therefore inconceivable; it was a contradiction in terms.

2. Since the confession of St. Peter they had all come to believe that He was the Son of God. This raised a new difficulty. How should the Son of God suffer or die? Evidently He was speaking in parables. So they were quite thrown off their guard, and, until the very last night, there was nothing in Our Lord's manner to cause them any serious alarm. The preaching and the miracles go on to the very end. There is no tremor in their Master's voice, no trouble in His eye, no pallor on His cheek. He is just the same as ever with the people, just the same with them. He does nothing to avert the blow that hangs over Him. His hour has come and He is there to meet it, quiet, self-possessed, serenely calm.

THIRD POINT.—Again, there is no fretfulness,

such as we often show when we have anything to suffer, but on the contrary a most marvelous sweetness. He is severe, indeed, toward the pharisees, for they were hypocrites; but to the people how kind He is! We see Him gathering the little children about Him, embracing and blessing them, weeping over the Holy City, defending those who sang "*Hosanna*," commending the widow's mite, defending Magdalen; and to the traitor Judas how patient, how gentle He is! Not one thought for Himself; all His care is for us.

Colloquy with that suffering Heart. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION III

CHRIST'S SOLEMN ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion. Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold thy King will come to thee, the just and saviour. He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (*Zach.* ix. 9). This prophecy Our Lord now fulfils (*Matt.* xxi; *Mark* xi; *Luke* xix; *John* xii).

Mental Picture.—Jesus seated on the ass, while the crowd spread green branches and garments in the way.

Petition.—Joy for our Saviour's triumph.

FIRST POINT.—Having come to Bethphage, Jesus sends two of His disciples, saying: “Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go.”

I love to think that I am that ass's colt and rejoice to hear that my Lord hath need of me and, unless I turn restive, will let me serve in my humble way for His triumph.

“And they brought the ass and the colt, . . . and, casting their garments on the colt, they sat Jesus thereon; and the multitude that went before and that followed cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!”

The pharisees, of course, were angry and called upon Jesus to rebuke His disciples; but they were themselves rebuked by His answer: “I say to you that if these shall hold their peace the stones will cry out.”

SECOND POINT.—“And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes.”

Salvation is at its gates and the doomed city knows it not. The Saviour has come unto His own and His own will not have Him. So many prophecies to point Him out, one of them being at this moment fulfilled under their eyes; yet such is their blindness that they do not see it.

Jesus knows that within a few short days the "*Hosannas*" of these children will be changed into the execrations of their fathers. That terrible cry even now sounds in His ears: "His blood be upon us and upon our children," these very children whose innocent lips are now chanting the hymn of praise. May God save me from the curse of a hardened heart and give me grace to know the day of my visitation.

THIRD POINT.—What a lesson we have here of the falsehood and fickleness of this world and the folly of setting one's hopes on it! It is ready at any moment to turn round on us, to cast us off, to laugh at our affliction. So long as a man is rich and prosperous he is worshipped wherever he goes; every one stands cap in hand to receive him; but let him fall into poverty—then how soon his trencher friends will drop away! They have shared his sunshine gladly enough; but they hide from him in foul weather. Semei threw stones at David when he was fleeing from Absalom; when he returned in triumph he went to meet him and do him honor. The lesson is as old as the hills; yet

every man and woman has to learn it by bitter experience. "O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?" (*Is.* iv. 3.)

Give me grace, O my God, to despise the world and to serve Thee alone.

Colloquy with Jesus weeping in the midst of His triumph. *Gloria in excelsis*, page 288.

MEDITATION IV

THE SUPPER IN BETHANY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—And they made Him a supper in Bethany; "and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that were at table with Him" (*Matt.* xxvi; *Mark* xiv; *John* xii).

Mental Picture.—Mary Magdalen pouring her precious spikenard upon the head of Jesus.

Petition.—Generosity to God.

FIRST PERIOD.—Mary therefore took an alabaster box of precious ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and then poured out the ointment on His head; "and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." But Judas said: "To what purpose is this waste?" We can imagine how indignant Magdalen felt as she caught the traitor's words.

Well, the world thinks, and always has thought with Judas. To sacrifice one's life or one's pleasures for God's sake in the world's eyes is a sheer waste of good things; but Judas was wrong, and so is the world. There can be no waste in what is given to God. He is infinitely greater and worthier than all we can do for Him, and when we have done all we can we have only performed our bare duty and are still but unprofitable servants. Let the alabaster box be broken, then, and the precious spikenard be outpoured. Let health, good name, comfort, life—everything—go by the board. If it is for His service, His greater glory, what better thing can happen to us? “I count all things as dung, that I may gain Christ” (*Philipp.* iii. 8).

SECOND POINT.—“This ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred pence and given to the poor,” said Judas; “and they murmured against her,” the bad example of the false disciple misleading the rest. What mischief one grumbler may do! “But Jesus said: Let her alone. Why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon Me. For the poor you have always with you, and whensoever you will you may do them good; but Me you have not always.”

Everything done for the poor our Saviour regards as done for Himself; at the same time personal service rendered to His sacramental presence is none the less welcome to Him. St. Wen-

ceslaus used to grind the corn and press the grapes with his own hands for the Holy Sacrifice. To serve the poor is to pour ointment on Christ's feet, to adorn His church or His altar is to anoint His head. Let it be my delight to do both.

THIRD POINT.—“Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her.” Thus does our Saviour defend and reward His devoted lover. Not only the house at Bethany but the whole Church through all the ages is filled with the odor of that ointment of hers; and on every side she has her imitators, men and women whose joy it is to spend themselves and be spent for the sake of Jesus, to break the alabaster box of the body and pour out the precious spikenard of the soul in the service of that dear Lord whose sacred body was broken and whose life-blood was poured forth so unstintingly on the cross. Surely there can be no waste in what is spent on Him. Let me give Him of my best.

Colloquy with Jesus and Magdalen. Sume, Domine, page 306.

MEDITATION V

JESUS IS SOLD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them: What will you give me and I will deliver Him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver; and from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray Him" (*Matt.* xxvi. 14).

Mental Picture.—Judas bargaining with the chief priests.

Petition.—Grace never more to sell my Saviour.

FIRST POINT.—Who is sold? The King of Kings, the Lord of all things visible and invisible, the Son of the most high God, made man for me.

Why is He sold?

That He may purchase my soul with His blood. "Thus saith the Lord: You were sold for naught, and you shall be redeemed without money" (*Is.* lii. 3). Christ is sold as a slave for the price of a slave that I may be set free from slavery.

Who sells Him?

One of the twelve, one of His chosen companions. "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it; and if he, that hated me, had spoken great things against me, I would per-

haps have hidden myself from him. But thou, a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with me; in the house of God we walked with consent" (*Is.* liv. 13-15). And I have sold Him, I for whom He has done so much, I who know Him so far better than Judas did!

SECOND POINT.—To whom is He sold? To those who are thirsting for His blood, who are already resolved upon His death. They are the governing body among His own people, the official representatives of the God of Israel, the administrators of His justice and mercy; but mercy and justice must now make room for envy and hatred. The outward forms of justice shall be observed; but suborned witnesses shall swear His life away, because these scribes and pharisees are determined to have it so.

THIRD POINT.—When is He sold? On the eve of the Pasch. The chief priests and ancients had met in council to consult together, "that by subtlety they might apprehend Jesus and put Him to death. But they said: Not on the feast day, lest perhaps there be a tumult among the people." Yet God willed it otherwise; so their plans were overruled. On the day of the Pasch the lamb was sacrificed in commemoration of God's great mercy in delivering His chosen people from Egypt; and on that same day our Lamb was slain for the re-

demption of the whole human race. His hour was come; "He was offered because it was His own will" (*Is.* liii. 7).

Colloquy with Jesus betrayed and sold. *Agnus Dei*, page 282.

MEDITATION VI

THE EATING OF THE PASCHAL LAMB

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus eats the Pasch for the last time with His disciples (*Matt.* xxvi; *Mark* xiv; *Luke* xxii). He appears either to have anticipated the time or to have selected the very earliest hour at which the Pasch could be legally celebrated.

Mental Picture.—Jesus seated with the twelve. The eyes of all are upon Him.

Petition.—Grace to enter into our Saviour's thoughts.

FIRST POINT.—Our Lord sends Peter and John from Bethany to prepare the Pasch in Jerusalem, saying: "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and, whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house: The Master sayeth, where is My refectory where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room, furnished; and there prepare for us."

With what calm dignity our divine Lord goes to His death, and how careful are His preparations for this last great act! "A large dining-room, furnished"; for here the old law is to give place to the new, the paschal lamb making way for the Holy Eucharist, and all possible ceremony should attend the mighty mystery. Blessed is that man whose house is thus chosen for the celebration of the first Mass! Let me take care that my heart is large and well-furnished when my Lord vouchsafes in holy communion to accept my hospitality.

SECOND POINT.—The eating of the paschal lamb was full of the deepest significance to our Saviour, being in every way symbolical of His own sufferings and death. The Israelites had been saved from the sword of the destroying angel by the blood of the lamb sprinkled upon their doorposts. They had thereupon fled from Egypt, passed through the Red Sea, and entered the wilderness on their way to the promised land. So was our Saviour's blood to deliver the human race from the tyranny of Satan, from the slavery of sin, and He, in their stead, was to pass through the red sea of His passion, to enter the wilderness of utter desolation, and so go to prepare a place for each one of them in the kingdom of His Father. The lamb was to be eaten in haste, with bitter herbs; not a bone of it was to be broken; it was the Passover,

or the passing of the Lord. In every respect, therefore, it was a type of the great sacrifice of Good Friday. It was the custom for the head of the family to recall to those around him the memory of God's mercies to His people and the history of this solemnity, and who could speak of it like Jesus? We may feel sure He explained its full significance that night. "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer." That is, I will never eat it again; for its fulfilment is now close at hand. And had not the Baptist pointed Him out as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world"?

THIRD POINT. — Although women were not obliged to be present, we can well believe that our Lady, accustomed as she was to go up to Jerusalem for the great festivals, was also keeping the Pasch that night, probably with her friends, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Think what it meant to her. Whilst it celebrated the delivery of her people it was the death warrant of her beloved Son!

Full of deep meaning as it was to Jesus and His Mother, there were many no doubt in Jerusalem that night to whom it was a mere ceremony and who went through it with the most barren formality. Alas! how often do Christians receive holy communion in the same cold way! I will resolve, then, to be more fervent in my communions, uniting my heart with that of the blessed Mother.

“Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. v. 7, 8).

Colloquy with Jesus and Mary. Anima Christi,
page 284.

MEDITATION VII

THE WASHING OF THE FEET

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Laying aside His garments, Jesus girds Himself with a towel and washes the feet of His disciples.

Mental Picture.—Jesus at the feet of Judas.

Petition.—To know, love, and follow my humble Saviour.

FIRST POINT.—It is with this touching act of humiliation that Our Lord begins His passion. “Knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands and that He came from God and goeth to God”—knowing all this, He kneels down to wash the feet of these poor fishermen.

It was also an act of great love; for “having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” “Blessed,” He had said, “are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say to you,

that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them” (*Luke* xii. 37).

Having taken His garments again, He drew this lesson from what He had done: “You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” Let me try to learn this lesson of humble charity so sweetly and persuasively taught.

SECOND POINT.—“He cometh therefore to Simon Peter”—Peter is always first with Our Lord; “and Peter saith to Him: Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” for he is amazed to see “the Son of the living God” acting as his servant. “Jesus answered: What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to Him: Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him: If I wash thee not thou shalt have no part with Me.” This was too much for Peter; so he burst out: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him: He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly; and you are clean, but not all. For He knew who he was that would betray Him; therefore He said: You are not all clean.

Dear Lord, I am not clean. Do Thou in Thy great mercy “wash me yet more from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin; for I know my in-

iquity and my sin is always before me." I lie at Thy feet full of leprosy; yet, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

THIRD POINT.—Last of all Jesus comes to Judas. He knows all the wickedness in that hard heart; still He will see what love can do to soften it; but Judas is not to be moved. He has rejected so many graces already, every rejection making him less susceptible than before; and now this last great mercy is cast aside and he is more hardened than ever.

How truly awful is the power of the human heart to shut itself up against God! Free will was meant to be a blessing; without it we could never gain the joys of heaven; but, when abused, it becomes a curse. What can show better than the history of Judas that a man's damnation is his own doing? God exhausts every device to save him; he defeats them all. God does not cast off His creature; but the creature casts off its God.

Colloquy with Our Lord and Master, who has become our servant. *Anima Christi*, page 284.

MEDITATION VIII

JESUS FORETELLS HIS BETRAYAL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The apostles, hearing with amaze-

JESUS FORETELLS HIS BETRAYAL 31

ment that there is a traitor among them, begin to ask: "Lord, is it I?" Judas also dares to put the same question, and Jesus answers him: "Thou hast said it" (*Matt.* xxvi; *Mark* xiv; *John* xiii).

Mental Picture.—The apostles looking one upon another in sorrow and dismay.

Petition.—That it may never be myself.

FIRST POINT.—Then Jesus "was troubled in spirit" and said: "Amen, I say to you that one of you is about to betray Me." "One of you." Yes, and how many others besides Judas would betray their Master! His was but a sample of what our Saviour had to expect from those calling themselves His disciples, and every act of treachery against Himself was now weighing heavy on His soul. No wonder He was "troubled in spirit."

Our Lord had more than one reason for showing that the traitor was known to Him.

1. To show how easily He could have escaped death, had He chosen.

2. To make one more appeal to the traitor's conscience.

3. In case he rejected it, to give him a good reason for withdrawing; for his presence was a burden to our Saviour and prevented His free communication with the rest.

4. That he might not be with them at the insti-

titution of the Holy Eucharist and so add to his other crimes a sacrilegious communion.

SECOND POINT.—“Hearing this, they began to be sorrowful and very much troubled, and to look one upon another, doubting of whom He spoke”; and one after another they asked Him: “Lord, is it I?” Jesus replied: “He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him if that man had not been born.” Then Judas, seeing that Our Lord’s answer did not mark him out as the traitor, and fearing that his silence would arouse suspicion, put the same question. He was apparently seated near to Our Lord, John being on one side, he on the other. Jesus replied so as only to be heard by him: “Thou hast said it.” And when John, at Peter’s suggestion, asked: “Lord, who is it?” Jesus whispered: “He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped”—to do this was a sign of friendship—“and when He had dipped the bread He gave it to Judas.”

THIRD POINT.—“And after the morsel Satan entered into him,” took full possession of him. And Jesus said to him: “That which thou dost, do quickly,” thereby giving him leave to go upon his accursed errand. “Now no man at the table knew to what purpose He said this unto him; for some

thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him: "Buy those things which we have need of for the festival, or that he should give something to the poor."

Our Saviour shows throughout the utmost consideration for the wretched traitor. He had told the twelve a year ago that one of them was a devil (*John* vi. 71); yet Judas had played his part so well and Our Lord's kindness to him had been so unvarying that even now they do not suspect him.

By dismissing him in this way Jesus makes it possible for him even now to repent and change his purpose; but Judas, "having received the morsel, went out immediately. And it was night." Yet the darkness without was not so deep as the darkness in the traitor's soul. He had obstinately rejected every advance Our Lord had made to him, and he now went out to sell his God and to sell his own soul to God's enemy.

Colloquy with Jesus betrayed and sold. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION IX

LESSONS OF HUMILITY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus warns all of them and especially Peter.

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour in the midst of His beloved disciples.

Petition.—"Lord, that I may know Thee, that I may know myself." (St. Augustine.)

FIRST POINT.—When Judas is gone Our Lord seems to breathe more freely. "Now," He says, "is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Peter, hearing that his Master is going away, protests that he will follow Him, and that he is ready to lay down his life for Him. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me?" says Our Lord. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, the cock shall not crow till thou deny Me thrice" (*John*, xiii. 38). "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (*Luke* xxii. 31, 32).

Satan desired to have them all, and Jesus prayed for all, yet above all for Peter; nor could that prayer go unheard. Peter's charity failed, indeed, but not his faith. Had his faith failed it would have been all over with him. May God strengthen my faith, that if, like Peter, I fall through weakness like Peter, I may rise again.

SECOND POINT.—"And there was also a strife amongst them, arising probably over their places at table, which of them should seem to be greater"

(*Luke* xxii. 24). It must have been very painful to our Saviour to see this childish contention brought up again at a moment so full of solemnity to Him; yet He deals with the disputants, as He always did, very gently. "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is the leader as he that serveth. . . . I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Had He not just washed their feet? He then goes on to promise more than they had ever dreamt of: They shall eat and drink at His table in His kingdom; they shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Our Lord would teach them and all of us to rise above all worldly ambitions. There is something higher beyond the grave and better worth having than any of those paltry prizes this earth holds out to us.

THIRD POINT.—"In My Father's house there are many mansions." There is room for all, and Our Lord assures them that He goes to prepare a place for each one. "I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am there you also may be." He then declares Himself to be the way, the truth, and the life, promises another comforter, the Holy Spirit, who shall take His place, and finally bequeaths to them His peace: "My peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you." And all this is

by way of preparation for the last great legacy He is now about to confer on us, the sacrament of His body and blood.

Colloquy with Jesus, prince of peace, our way, our truth, our life. *Agnus Dei*, page 282.

MEDITATION X

THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Lord Jesus “the day before He suffered took bread in His holy and venerable hands, and raising His eyes to heaven, to Thee, God, His Father almighty, giving thanks unto Thee, blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this. This is My body” (Canon of the Mass).

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour with His own body in His hands.

Petition.—A deep sense of the greatness of the gift and the love of the giver.

FIRST POINT.—The divine wisdom of this invention. Had we been told to devise some means whereby our Saviour should still remain with us after His ascension we might have said: “Abide with us, O Lord, by Thy grace, by Thy protective power, through Thy memory enshrined in the Gos-

pels, through Thy holy Church.” The real presence would never have entered the mind of man; only the God-man could have conceived it.

Where should we be without the real presence? We know how desolate our churches seem on Good Friday, when the Blessed Sacrament is removed; what if it were always thus?

The ruthless havoc of the Reformers notwithstanding, England is still rich in glorious cathedral and parish churches built of yore by our Catholic forefathers. Here they stand, empty and meaningless, like shrines that have been robbed of their relics, like a clock-face without its hands, like a rich golden setting from which the gem has dropped out. But for faith in the real presence they would never have been raised, and now the real presence is no more. Without our sacramental God our altars would be desolate, indeed; for the Blessed Sacrament is the heart of the Church.

SECOND POINT.—Divine power. In one moment the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, the accidents, or outward appearances remaining unaltered, and Christ being whole and entire in every part of the host, as our souls are in every part of our bodies. By the force of the words indeed His body alone is there; yet, because He is a living man, His blood and His soul

come with it, and, because He is God, His divinity also; so what is laid upon the tongue of each communicant is the Son of God made man.

THIRD POINT.—Divine love. Love and love alone induced Him to give this gift. “My delight is to be with the children of men” (*Prov. viii. 31*). “Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (*Matt. xxviii. 20*).

“This,” He says, “is My body, which shall be delivered for you” (*1 Cor. xi. 24*); the very same body, that is, which to-morrow shall be nailed on the cross. Here then, as well as on the cross, He “hath loved me and delivered Himself for me” (*Gal. ii. 20*).

He might have given me mere bread, as an emblem of His body, and through that bread have imparted grace, as through the water in Baptism; yet nothing would satisfy His love, but to make me one with Himself. Eliseus stretched his limbs on those of the dead child, putting his mouth upon the child’s mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, his hands upon his hands, till the child’s flesh grew warm. My Saviour does far more for me; He becomes my food, mingling His sacred flesh with mine.

Colloquy with our sacramental God. Pange lingua, page 294.

MEDITATION XI

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, THE INSTITUTION OF THE
HOLY EUCHARIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"In like manner after they had supped, taking also this precious chalice in His holy and venerable hands, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take and drink ye all of this; for this is the chalice of My blood of the new and everlasting testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many unto remission of sins" (Canon of the Mass).

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour with the chalice in His hands.

Petition.—A deep sense of the greatness of the gift and the love of the giver.

FIRST POINT.—"Where is the shepherd," asks St. John Chrysostom, "who feeds his sheep on his own blood? Yet why talk of shepherds? Are there not many mothers who after the pains of childbirth hand their children over to be suckled by hired nurses? This Our Lord could not endure; but He must feed us with the blood of His own veins and in every possible way unite Himself with us" (*Hom. in 1 Cor.*)

By the force of the words the precious blood

alone comes into the chalice; yet, for the reasons given above, we have also with the blood the body, soul, and Godhead, the whole Christ, God and man.

SECOND POINT.—“My blood of the new and everlasting testament.” Moses “took the blood of calves and goats . . . and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you; . . . and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (*Heb.* iv. 19, 20, 22). Such was the Old Testament, a figure of the great Redemption to come, conferring legal cleanness, an earthly inheritance, temporal blessings; whereas the New imparts perfect remission of sin, the life of grace, eternal felicity. “For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer, being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?” (*Heb.* ix. 13, 14.) “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day” (*John* vi. 55).

THIRD POINT.—“Which shall be shed for you and for many unto remission of sins,” the very same blood which shall flow to-morrow on the cross. “For many,” that is for all without exception, whether they profit by it or not. Every

single human soul has been bought with the whole of Christ's blood. One drop would have been enough; yet He would shed it all; for "with Him there is plentiful redemption" (*Is.* cxxix. 7).

"Shed for you," for me—all for me. "He hath loved me and delivered Himself for me" (*Gal.* ii. 20). Let me think of this every time I hear Mass.

Colloquy with our sacramental God. Pange lingua, page 294.

MEDITATION XII

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is a hidden God. "A little while, and now you shall not see Me" (*John* xvi. 16). "A cloud received Him out of their sight" (*Acts* i. 9).

Mental Picture.—The Tabernacle, with the lamp burning before it, the emblem of our faith.

Petition.—A deep and living faith in the real presence.

FIRST POINT.—Why has our Saviour hidden Himself so completely in the Holy Eucharist? One ray of light coming forth from the Tabernacle, a halo, however faint, hovering about the consecrated host would bring the whole world to His feet; yet He withholds it. He who desires so much the love

and the homage of men hides Himself utterly from their sight. What can be the reason of it? It is that we may have the merit of faith unsupported by any sensible evidence. "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed" (*John* xx. 29). If an unearthly light played about the altar we could not help adoring; as it is, we can do so or not at our pleasure, and thus our homage is a free homage and of far greater value than if, like the Jews of old, we could see the glory of the Lord.

SECOND POINT.—What a truly magnificent act of faith we make every time we bend the knee to the altar! Thomas refused to believe unless he put his finger into the wounds of Christ's hands and his hand into His side. We make no such conditions. "It is I. Fear not," said our risen Lord to His scared disciples. "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle, and see" (*Luke* xxiv. 39). We neither handle nor see. The Godhead was then hidden under the veil of human nature; now both natures are still more utterly hidden in this little host.

Marvelous, indeed, was the faith of the Magi when, falling down, they adored the Babe of Bethlehem; yet they had been guided to His feet by a miraculous star. We have seen no star, and yet we adore. Our faith is most like that of the repentant thief, who beheld Jesus nailed on the cross, mocked and reviled by the priests and leaders of

His people, and in spite of all this acknowledged Him as God. Our faith, like his, is a gift from on high. Others have it not; we have not merited it; it comes from God alone.

THIRD POINT.—The real presence is one of those dogmas forming the great line of cleavage between those inside and those outside the Church. We read in Exodus how the cloud that led the host of Israel as soon as Pharaoh came up in pursuit removed from its place and “stood between the Egyptian camp and the camp of Israel; and it was a dark cloud and enlightening the night” (*Ex.* xiv. 20). It was a dark cloud to the Egyptians, but a bright light to the people of God. Even so the Holy Eucharist stands between us Catholics and an unbelieving world, light to us, darkness to them. How can we ever thank our God enough for this marvelous presence and for our faith in it? Sad that with such an unclouded faith we should have loved so coldly.

Colloquy with our hidden God. Pange lingua, page 294.

MEDITATION XIII

HOLY MASS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Lord, having instituted the Holy

Eucharist, said to His disciples: "Do this for a commemoration of Me."

Mental Picture.—The apostles drinking of the chalice.

Petition.—Love and veneration for the holy Mass.

FIRST POINT.—The Blessed Eucharist is not a sacrament only, but a sacrifice. By a sacrifice we mean "the offering of a victim, or something set apart as an oblation, by a priest, to God alone, in testimony of His being the sovereign Lord of all things." It is, therefore, the supreme act of worship. We honor the saints and angels and the ever-blessed Virgin-Mother according to their dignity; but sacrifice we can not offer them; for sacrifice is an acknowledgment that God is God. It is as old as the human race, and was prescribed by God from the beginning; Cain and Abel learned it from Adam. In the patriarchal religion there was no priestly order, but the head of each family was its priest. Under the Old Testament a priestly tribe was chosen, the priests being solemnly consecrated to the service of the altar. Religion without a sacrifice is like an inscription without a meaning, an arch without a key-stone. The sacrifice of the New Testament is the Holy Mass.

SECOND POINT.—The sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same with that of the cross; for on the altar, as on Calvary, Christ is both priest and

victim and offers Himself to His heavenly Father for the same ends. There were four great sacrifices under the Old Law:

1. The sacrifice of thanksgiving.
2. The sacrifice of propitiation, or atonement for sin.
3. The sacrifice of impetration to implore God's blessings.
4. The Holocaust, or whole-burnt offering, simply and solely for the worship of God.

All these are combined in the Holy Mass. Yet between the sacrifice of the cross and that of the altar there is a difference of manner; for in the Mass Christ offers Himself through the ministry of His priests, and, moreover, there is no real blood-shedding, though this is mystically represented by the separate consecration of the bread and wine.

THIRD POINT.—Under the law of Moses sacrifice could be offered in one place only, the Temple in Jerusalem; but our sacrifice is offered on every altar in the world. “From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation; for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts” (*Mal.* i. 11).

Surely, then, we ought to love the Holy Mass and delight to be present at it; for by hearing

Mass and communicating at it we give unspeakable glory to God and draw down His choicest blessings on ourselves, on all we pray for, and on the whole world.

Colloquy with Jesus, priest and victim. Pange lingua, page 294.

MEDITATION XIV

OUR LORD'S WORDS AFTER THE LAST SUPPER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus speaks to His disciples as a master, teaching great truths, as a consoler, promising great blessings, and to His Father as an advocate, interceding for them (*John* xiv, xv, xvi).

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour seated in the midst of His disciples, who are gazing intently upon Him.

Petition.—Grace to understand His teaching and to form my life upon it.

FIRST POINT.—Love of Himself is the first lesson. “As the Father hath loved Me I also have loved you. Abide in My love.” “The Father Himself hath loved you because you have loved Me.” Christ, therefore, is the bond of union between God and man; for God must love those who love His Son, and the more they love His beloved the greater His love for them.

“If you love Me keep My commandments.” This shows how we are to prove our love for Christ and provides a sure test of the depth and sincerity of our love; for we can not bear to displease those who are really dear to us.

“If you keep My commandments you shall abide in My love, as I also have kept My Father’s commandments and do abide in His love.” Here we have the encouragement of our Master’s example.

And now for the reward of this faithful love. “If any one love Me he will keep My word, and not only will My Father love him, but We will come to him and will make our abode with him.” A close union is here promised us with God and His Incarnate Son even in this world, a union to be made eternal and indissoluble in the world to come.

SECOND POINT.—The second lesson is love of our neighbor.—“A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” He calls it with good reason a new commandment; for it goes far beyond the prescription of the old law, “Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself” (*Lev. xix. 18*). Our Lord would have us love not our friends only, but our enemies, a lesson He has taught in the parable of the Good Samaritan and was to enforce again on the cross by His prayer for them that crucified Him.

It is new, moreover, because He gives it a new motive. We are to love one another henceforth for His sake, because He hath loved us; and so He calls it "My commandment," adding that by keeping it we prove that we are His: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples."

THIRD POINT.—The third lesson is patience and joy in suffering.

"They will put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God." But this is a sign of divine election; for "If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Yet it will all end well. "The world shall rejoice and you shall be made sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy . . . and your joy no man shall take from you." "I will not leave you orphans." "I will be with you," hearing and answering your prayers. "If you ask the Father anything in My name He will give it you." "If you ask Me anything in My name that I will do."

Colloquy with Jesus, our master, consoler, advocate. Our Father.

MEDITATION XV

CHRIST'S PRAYER TO HIS FATHER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Having thus encouraged His disciples, lifting His eyes to heaven, Jesus prays aloud to His eternal Father.

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour with His face turned heavenwards and with uplifted hands pouring forth this beautiful prayer, while the apostles listen in breathless awe.

Petition.—"Lord, teach us to pray" (*Luke xi. 1*).

FIRST POINT.—Our Lord prays first for Himself.

"Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. . . . I have glorified Thee on earth. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee." He is praying as man that His human nature may share in that glory which was His, as God, from all eternity. We know how this prayer was answered. Even on the cross God glorified His Son by the prodigies that accompanied His death, and after that death followed His triumphant resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His enthronement at the Father's right hand, who "hath put

all things under His feet" (1 *Cor.* xv. 26). "O Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory."

SECOND POINT.—He prays for His apostles.

"I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine." Our Lord gave His life for the world and for every soul in it and was always praying for the whole human race; but now at this solemn moment He is thinking of His chosen twelve; and yet in praying for them He is in truth praying also most efficaciously for the world, which was to be converted by their preaching and labors.

Two things He asks for this little band:

1. Perseverance. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name. . . . I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil." (Compare the *Pater Noster*:—"But deliver us from evil.")

2. Holiness. "Sanctify them in truth."

THIRD POINT.—He prays for all the faithful children of His Church.

"And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me." And He asks two things also for us:

1. Unity. "That they may all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be

one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”

2. Eternal beatitude. “Father, I will that where I am they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me.”

I may join in every petition of this divine prayer, pleading for my Saviour’s triumph, for the Pope and bishops, successors of the apostles, for all the faithful, myself among them, that we may all be one in God through Jesus Christ, and that the world may come to know its Redeemer.

Colloquy with Jesus, the Son of God. Gloria in excelsis, page 288.

MEDITATION XVI

OUR LORD LEAVES THE SUPPER CHAMBER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—And when they had sung a hymn they went forth to the Mount of Olives (*Matt.* xxvi; *Mark* xiv; *Luke* xxii).

Mental Picture.—Jesus with His disciples crossing the brook Kedron.

Petition.—Deep and tender sympathy with our suffering Lord.

FIRST POINT.—It is with hearts full of fear and foreboding that the apostles follow Him; for

the cross has now for the first time cast its shadow upon their path, that cross which has been resting its whole weight on the heart of our Saviour from His childhood upward. "And Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalized in Me this night." Their hearts are brimful of love for Him now; yet He foresees sadly how their human frailty will give way under the awful trial about to fall on them. The thought of their desertion is a cruel grief to Him; yet His words are full of tenderness and pity: "For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed." And then He goes on to console them with the assurance that, in spite of their unfaithfulness, they will still be dear to Him: "After I shall be risen again I will go before you into Galilee."

SECOND POINT.—"And Peter answering said to Him: Though all shall be scandalized in Thee I will never be scandalized." Very pitiful is Peter's self-confidence. He had spoken in the same strain already, and Our Lord's solemn warning had passed unheeded. Now Jesus rebukes him once more: "Amen, I say to thee, to-day, even this night, before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny Me thrice. Peter saith to Him: Though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee. And in like manner said all the disciples."

How often and how fervently have I declared my love for Thee, O Lord, only to fall away from Thee again!

THIRD POINT.—“Then Jesus came with them to a country place which is called Gethsemani, and He said to His disciples: Sit you here till I go yonder and pray. And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee”—the three who had seen His glory on Mount Thabor—“He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.”

He *began*. This is what St. Augustine would call “a watchful word”; for there is a deep significance in it. Our Saviour has always had every detail of His passion before His mind; yet it is only now that He begins to show His sorrow. As for me, no sooner have I anything to suffer than I either grow fretful or make a martyr of myself. Let me learn to bear my sorrows in silence. “Then He saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death.” It would seem to have been God’s purpose that His Son should die of a broken heart; but the malice of men have other tortures in store for Him; so He who gave men free will weaves their cruelty into His original design and suffers them to put their Saviour to death.

“Stay you here and watch with Me.” Saying these words, He staggers forward under that great load of heartrending sorrow, till He disappears

from their sight in the little cavern where He was wont to pray.

Colloquy with our suffering Saviour. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION XVII

OUR LORD'S AGONY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And He fell upon His face praying, and being in an agony He prayed the longer."

Mental Picture.—Jesus bathed in a sweat of blood.

Petition.—Sorrow with my Lord so full of sorrow.

FIRST POINT.—The evangelists use three terms to describe what took place in our Saviour's soul: fear, sorrow, and weariness.

His fear arose from the anticipation of the awful tortures which were to come upon Him. He shrank from pain as we do, and was stricken with terror at the thought of the scourging and the nailing on the cross. "Father," He sobbed, "if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me."

His sorrow was for the sins of men, my own sins among them, all of which were present to Him, all of which were laid upon Him as His own. And sin was not to Him what it is to us. Being God

as well as man, He could measure its guilt, its degradation, its monstrous ingratitude, its fearful consequences; and it filled His soul with unutterable loathing, with heart-breaking grief.

His weariness was begotten of unrequited love, the cruel sense of failure, the heartless waste of His blood, whereof so many for whom it was shed would make no use at all, would even turn it to their own damnation.

So intense was His anguish that first a cold sweat broke out all over His body, standing in big drops upon His brow; then this sweat became tinged with blood, till at last it was pure blood that oozed from every pore, filling His garments and dropping from His face on to the ground.

SECOND POINT.—Our Saviour's prayer. "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me." What an agony of woe breathes through this heart-broken petition! What fear, what sadness, what weariness! It teaches us that we, too, may pray for relief in sorrow; yet we must learn to add, as Jesus did: "Nevertheless not My will but Thine be done." His heart is perfectly submissive to the decree of His Father. While as man He recoils from the appalling sacrifice demanded of Him, His Father's will is His will; nor does He for one moment set Himself in opposition to it.

THIRD POINT.—"And there appeared to Him an

angel from heaven strengthening Him." This angel was sent to whisper to our Saviour's bleeding heart what that dark cloud of anguish had for the time obscured, the glory His Passion would give to God, the salvation of countless souls made in God's likeness, the repentance of sinners, the triumphs of His Church, the love of His saints, the generosity of His martyrs, the immaculate holiness of His virgin Mother, all which were to be the fruit of the sufferings He was now to undergo. Stern comfort in truth; we in our weakness may think it cold comfort; yet Jesus was grateful to that blessed spirit and gathered new strength from his inspirations. Nevertheless to the end of His prayer He went on repeating the same words.

Colloquy with our heartbroken Saviour. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION XVIII

THE SLEEPING DISCIPLES

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Twice does Our Lord interrupt His prayer to visit His disciples.

Mental Picture.—Jesus, pale and exhausted, arousing them from sleep.

Petition.—Grace to watch and pray.

FIRST POINT.—A strange and touching thing now

happens. Angels can not suffer and therefore, though full of pity, can not share in our sufferings; but Jesus is a real man and, like every son of Adam, feels the need of human sympathy. So, while the angel returns to heaven, He goes to look for His three chosen friends. He had told them to watch; He now finds them sleeping. They have no sympathy to give Him; yet how gently He reproaches them! "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak."

Love, we all know, is marvelously ingenious in finding excuses. The two subjective conditions of sin are knowledge and consent, and Our Lord defends us on both counts. Here He excuses us for want of full consent. It is the weakness of the flesh, He pleads, not the unwillingness of the spirit. In His prayer for those who crucify Him He excuses us for our want of full knowledge: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Who can sound the depths of compassion in the Heart of Christ?

SECOND POINT.—Our Saviour then returned to His solitary prayer, and when after a while He came back to them "He found them again asleep, for their eyes were heavy; and they knew not what to answer Him."

Am I not in just the same case? I have slept

when I ought to have been watching; I have left my dear Lord to suffer alone, and I know not what to answer Him. All my grand protestations of love and loyalty have proved empty and worthless. I am, indeed, an unprofitable servant.

Christ has now entered into His eternal kingdom; yet He is still as human as ever. Has He not in these latter days come back to earth at Paray to complain that men love Him so little, to beg for their love? In the Holy Eucharist He is still longing for our sympathy.

THIRD POINT.—“And He cometh the third time,” His prayer being now finished, “and saith to them: Sleep on now and take your rest. Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.” There is a gentle irony in these sad words which must have touched them to the quick. It is too late now; they have missed their opportunity; the hour is come and they are not ready for it.

What bitterness there is for all of us in the thought of what might have been! If I had been more faithful, if I had but watched and prayed, how far otherwise I should have borne myself under temptation! how much remorse I should have been spared! how much suffering I should have spared my Saviour!

Neither Peter, James, nor John had obeyed Our Lord's injunction; yet Peter fell terribly, James,

like the rest, ran away, John was faithful to the end. How inscrutable are the ways of grace! Maybe it was John's purity of heart that saved him.

Colloquy with Jesus left alone. Anima Christi, page 284.

MEDITATION XIX

THE TRAITOR

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Saviour for one moment manifests His divine power, then allows Judas to betray Him and, having healed the ear of Malchus, yields Himself up to be bound.

Mental Picture.—The false disciple kissing his Master.

Petition.—That I may never again give the traitor's kiss.

FIRST POINT.—Now the soldiers are upon Him and He goes forth to meet them. With what serene majesty He faces His foes! How calm and self-possessed! Like a brave captain in a storm at sea—nay, rather, like Himself as He stood up and quelled the winds and waves of Genesareth.

“Whom seek ye?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” say they. “I am He.” No wonder “they went back-

ward and fell to the ground;" for they seemed to hear the name of their God as Moses had received it ages ago: "I am who am."

Our Lord had now declared Himself; so there was no further need for Judas to point Him out; but the poor wretch was afraid of losing his blood-money if he failed to fulfil his contract. It is hardly conceivable that he believed Jesus to be "the Son of the living God," as his fellow-apostles had done since Peter's confession. Perhaps his want of faith was one reason of his terrible abandonment; or he may have once had the faith and let it die out in his heart. That of course would explain everything.

SECOND POINT.—So Judas now comes forward to fulfil his accursed bargain. "Friend," asks our Saviour, "whereto art thou come?" Was this said in irony? Oh, no! There was an awful irony, a most bitter jest in that "Hail, Rabbi!" of the traitor. He hails Christ as his Lord and Master at the very moment when he is giving himself for ever, body and soul, to Satan; but the good Jesus meant what He said. He called him friend because He longed to make him so. His heart was yearning for that perishing soul. Good Shepherd as He was, He was on the point of laying down His life for that lost sheep of His flock; but all is in vain. The cruel sign is given, and then, with a look of unutterable sadness, Jesus

says: "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" They were His last words to that false friend.

THIRD POINT.—Then, as they came up to lay hands on Our Lord, Peter drew the sword which he had girded on in the supper-chamber and aimed a blow at Malchus, the first to advance. No doubt he meant to cleave his head in twain; but, being a fisherman and not used to handling a sword, he struck awry and only cut off his ear. Little did he think that within an hour he would deny the beloved Master he was now defending. Having neglected to watch and pray in his own behalf, he has no scruple in falling furiously on Malchus, who is not half so culpable as himself. And I, like Peter, am often savagely severe on my neighbor when I ought rather to wreak vengeance on myself.

"Put up thy sword," says Jesus. A hard command this for Peter. What am I here for, thought he, if I may not strike a blow? To a generous nature nothing is so distressing as enforced inaction. Active resistance is stimulating, passive resistance depressing; but Christ's Church, like Christ Himself, is to vanquish by suffering.

Our Saviour had told Peter to take that sword—so at least Peter understood Him; yet now He forbids him to use it. Even so He puts it in our power to avenge ourselves on those that wrong us

only that we may have the merit of refusing to do so. Therefore, whenever I am tempted to do or say anything unkind I will think I hear Christ saying to me: "Put up thy sword." Then Jesus heals the wounded man's ear and gives Himself up to be bound. His disciples fly in all directions and He is left alone in the hands of His enemies.

Colloquy with Jesus bound. *Anima Christi*, page 284.

MEDITATION XX

OUR LORD BEFORE ANNAS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus is taken first before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiphas, is questioned by him, and struck in the face.

Mental Picture.—Jesus receiving the blow.

Petition.—Courage to bear insults and injuries for Christ's sake.

FIRST POINT.—Among our Saviour's captors were "the chief priests and magistrates of the Temple and the ancients." These same men were present afterward at His crucifixion; yet, as they were His judges, their presence was not only unnecessary, but utterly unbecoming their position. Two things we gather from it:

1. Their intense malice against Our Lord.

2. That even before His trial they were resolved to convict Him.

This now brings upon them a severe reproof; for our Saviour throughout His passion, while saying nothing in His own defence, always speaks out fearlessly in the cause of justice. "Are you come out," He says, "as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the Temple you did not stretch forth your hands against Me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness." You are doing this, He adds, "that the Scriptures may be fulfilled."

Had not these wretched men quite silenced the voice of conscience this should have been enough to frighten them. They knew well what the prophets had said of the Messiah, and what they were doing now and had it in their hearts to do was a literal fulfilment of those predictions. Yet when they had nailed Him on the cross they actually dared to quote against Him a psalm which they well knew to be Messianic: "He trusted in God. Let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God" (*Ps.* xxi. 9). O God! What a fearful thing it is to resist Thy grace! All this time they were strictly observing the law, fasting twice in the week, giving tithes of all that they possessed. What fearful self-deception!

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord is now dragged away

into the city and brought before Annas, who questions Him "of His disciples and of His doctrine." Jesus declares that He has always spoken openly and appeals to those who have heard Him. Again He speaks boldly and fearlessly; for it was palpably unfair and unjust to attempt to lead Him to incriminate Himself in an informal examination with a view to gather evidence against Him for the trial that was to follow.

Can I appeal without fear to all who have known and heard me? If I did, would there not be some sadly damaging evidence against me?

THIRD POINT.—Thereupon "one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest thou the high priest so?" This outrage met with no reproof from Annas; another gross abuse of justice. Our Saviour therefore once more protested gently, but firmly: "If I have spoken evil, bear testimony of the evil; but if well, why strik-est thou Me?"

Is this how I receive injuries? "A mild answer turneth away wrath" (*Prov.* xv. 1). Let me learn from the good Jesus how to defend myself.

Colloquy with Christ smitten in the face. Our Father.

MEDITATION XXI

PETER'S FALL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Simon Peter denies his Master three times.

Mental Picture.—Our Lord looking on Peter.

Petition.—True repentance.

FIRST POINT.—Peter had followed Our Lord “afar off.” When he arrived at the court of the high priest he was refused admission; but John, recognizing his voice, spoke to the portress and brought in Peter. “The maid saith to Peter: Art thou not also one of this man’s disciples? He saith: I am not.”

This first denial was perhaps hardly deliberate. The question was unexpected and the reply sprang to his lips from a sudden instinct of self-preservation; but, having made this first false step, he began to act a part, warming himself at the fire and joining in the talk around it, as though he were an indifferent spectator. He was now wholly under the influence of fear; his one great object henceforth was to escape further notice. O my God, give me grace to be on my guard against a first false move which may involve such fearful consequences; for if I do not take the first step I shall not take the second.

SECOND POINT.—Directly after this first denial the cock crew; but Peter did not notice it. Presently “another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied, with an oath: I know not the man. And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them; for even thy speech doth discover thee”—the Galileans apparently having a dialect of their own. “Then Peter began to curse and swear that he knew not the man; and immediately the cock crew again.” That cock might have crowed himself hoarse before Peter heard him. Fear had now taken such complete possession of him that he was deaf to every warning.

How often has it been so with me! When under the dominion of some strong passion I reject all good advice and every holy inspiration. What would affect me deeply at another time has no power then. I am dragged along like a prisoner in chains.

THIRD POINT.—“And the Lord, turning, looked on Peter.” It was a look full of sorrow and tender reproach. Not only Peter’s cowardly denial, but countless others of which it was the type and sample were lying heavy on that loving heart. That look went straight to Peter’s heart, recalling to his memory everything he had forgotten; his

protestations of love and loyalty, the Lord's solemn but fruitless warnings, his neglect of prayer in the garden—all came back to him then, “and going forth he wept bitterly,” or, as St. Mark puts it so tenderly, “he began to weep.” Yes, Peter began to weep, and till his dying day, we are told, he could never hear the cock crow but his grief broke forth anew, till that worn face of his was furrowed with the tears that were always falling.

If I have sinned like Peter, God grant me grace to repent like Peter.

Colloquy with Jesus looking on me. Miserere, page 291.

MEDITATION XXII

THE CONDEMNATION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—False witnesses are suborned against Jesus, but their testimony does not agree. Then the high priest adjures Him in the name of God to say if He be the Christ, the Son of God, and, on His confession, He is condemned to death.

Mental Picture.—Jesus declaring His divinity.

Petition.—Faith in Christ as God.

FIRST POINT.—“Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death.” They them-

selves were His judges; but, being already resolved on His death, they stooped to the basest means to accomplish their purpose. Mark how jealousy and hatred degrade the character and darken the conscience.

“Their evidence did not agree.” Alas! there is no need to bring forsworn witnesses against me. How many there are who can bear true evidence, my own conscience confirming all they say! I will plead guilty, therefore, and throw myself on God’s great mercy, that I may not be convicted and condemned at the last day.

SECOND POINT.—“And the high priest, rising up, said to Him: Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace.” Another lesson for me. Have I ever held my peace under a false accusation? Why, it is as much as I can do to be silent under a true one. “And the high priest said to Him: I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Then out of reverence for the office Caiphas held and still more for His Father’s name Jesus replied: “I am. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

The Son of man, who is also the Son of God, shall come to judge the world, and then shall these

very men who are now about to condemn Him to death be brought before Him for condemnation.

THIRD POINT.—“Then the high priest, rending his garments, saith: What need we any further witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy; what think you? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death.” Thus by a formal act of the great council of His chosen people the God of Israel was finally and forever rejected.

As Our Lord stood there before them He thought of all that He had done for them in their long history of two thousand years; how He had brought them out of the land of Egypt in signs and wonders; how patiently He had borne with their idolatries; how often He had warned and threatened them; how mercifully He had chastized and forgiven them. He thought of his own preaching through their cities and villages, of the miracles He had wrought to convert them and induce them to accept Him as their promised Redeemer. All has been in vain. They have cast Him off. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (*John* i. 11). And this great crime, like every other throughout the passion, was to Christ a typical one, a sample of what was to be repeated again and again. Individual men and whole nations, too, would renounce their allegiance to Him, revolt against His Church and break away into heresy and schism. Oh, let me once more vow

fealty to my Saviour and by my devotion atone for the disloyalty He meets with on every side.

Colloquy with the Son of God condemned to death. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION XXIII

CHRIST MOCKED AND BLINDFOLDED

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—He is left all night in the hands of His guards.

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour blindfolded and surrounded by a crowd of rude men.

Petition.—Grace to share in His shame.

FIRST POINT.—The council broke up, every one going to his home, while Jesus was left to be the sport of the servants. “Then did they spit in His face and buffeted Him,” all which had been foretold by the prophet: “I have given My body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them. I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me, and spit upon Me” (*Is. i. 6*).

As for me, I can not bear the smallest insult. A blow in the face makes me furious; but to be spat upon! Oh, I could not tolerate that! Yet see how patiently Christ endures it all.

SECOND POINT.—“And they blindfolded Him and smote Him on the face, saying: Prophecy

unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee." They take their cue from their masters. Has He not been proved an impostor before the Council? How, then, can He deserve any pity? Prophecy, O Christ!

"Be not deceived," says St. Paul; "God is not mocked" (*Gal. vi. 7*). They that dare to mock Him do so to their own fearful peril. Yet the sinner is not afraid to blindfold the face of Christ by hiding his sins, even in confession. "And they have said: The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob understand. Understand, ye senseless among the people, and, you fools, be wise at last. He that planteth the ear shall He not hear? or He that formed the eye, doth He not consider? He that chastizeth nations, shall He not rebuke; He that teacheth man knowledge? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vain" (*Ps. xciii. 7-10*).

This is all we know of the events of that night. What a night it must have been for Jesus, all alone among these savages! The unrecorded sufferings of our Saviour should teach us the priceless value of those sorrows which, borne in silence and hidden from men, are known only to God.

THIRD POINT.—St. John now goes to visit our blessed Lady and to tell her all that has taken place. So while Jesus spends a sleepless night in the hands of His torturers Mary is watching and

weeping in sympathy with her Son. It would be a hard heart that did not feel for them.

Colloquy with Jesus and Mary. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION XXIV

THE DESPAIR OF JUDAS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed and went and hanged himself with a halter."

Mental Picture.—Judas rushing out of the Temple in wild despair.

Petition.—To know the mercy of the Sacred Heart.

FIRST POINT.—"Then Judas who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood."

His remorse, had he so chosen, was in time to save himself, though too late to save his Master; and just so it is with us. Our repentance always comes too late to save Jesus; yet our loving Saviour is only too well pleased if it comes in time to save ourselves. If only Judas, like Peter, had begun to weep we may be sure he would have been

at once forgiven, and the good Jesus would have treated him as He did Peter, never again referring to his treason, save to give him an opportunity of atoning for it.

SECOND POINT.—How was it that Judas did not repent? He saw at last the enormity of his crime and was stricken with remorse for it. He could not keep the bribe he had taken; so he brought it back and publicly acknowledged his guilt. One step more would have brought him as a true penitent to his Saviour's feet; why did he not take it?

To say nothing of the power the devil now had over him, we can find two other answers to this question.

1. His long and obstinate resistance to grace had hardened his heart; there was no love left in it; and so the consciousness of his terrible crime, instead of leading him to repentance, drove him to despair.

2. And yet, in spite of all this, his remorse might have been turned into true contrition but for the cold and heartless treatment he met with from the priests of his people. "What is that to us?" they said. "Look thou to it." These men were God's representatives, whose duty it was to lift up the fallen and fill them with new hope; instead of which they spurned the unhappy sinner from them: "What is that to us? Look thou to it."

Terrible, indeed, is the guilt we incur when by

our harshness or want of sympathy we stand between the sinner and his God.

THIRD POINT.—Then, throwing the accursed coins down on the pavement, Judas rushed out of the Temple, hopeless, friendless, maddened with the consciousness of his guilt, and, while his Saviour was dying for his sake, “hanged himself with a halter.” Another typical sin, causing unspeakable anguish to the Sacred Heart, both in itself and as a sample of so many other despairing deaths. “Come to Me, all ye that labor and are burdened.” But no; they will not come.

Colloquy with the Good Shepherd grieving over His lost sheep. *De Profundis*, page 290.

MEDITATION XXV

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—“Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the governor’s hall,” who after a short examination declares Him innocent.

Mental Picture.—Jesus, bound and guarded, standing before the Roman governor.

Petition.—Loyalty to Christ, our King.

FIRST POINT.—Our Lord’s accusers, being scrupulous observers of the law, “went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled”; yet they are quite ready to shed innocent blood. Have I never

been a whitened sepulchre, never strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel? When Pilate asks: "What accusation bring you against this man?" they show no hesitation in altering the charge, so as to influence the governor's mind against Him. Christ had been condemned because He declared Himself the Son of God. The charges they now allege are totally different: "We have found this man perverting our nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar and saying that he is Christ the King."

These charges we know were utterly false. Our Lord had not perverted the people. As to the tribute, He had said: "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." He had hidden Himself when the people would have made Him king. But their object now is to represent Him as a rebel against the authority of their hated conquerors, the Romans.

"Answerest Thou nothing?" said Pilate. "Behold in how many things they accuse Thee. But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate wondered." He had not come to defend Himself; He had only come to die.

SECOND POINT.—The governor then examined Our Lord privately. "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" he asked. "Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have deliv-

ered Thee up to me. What hast Thou done?" He little dreamt what a cruel wound he was probing—"Thy own nation!" "Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews;" in other words, He would have come with an army at His back, like Mohammed; "but now My kingdom is not from hence." Pilate therefore said to Him: Art Thou a king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest (truly) that I am a king. For this was I born and for this I came into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."

What an opportunity for that poor heathen! The "good tidings of great joy" are ringing in his ears; will he listen? "What is truth?" he asks contemptuously. Had he only waited for the answer to his question it would have been well with him; but no. "When he had said this he went out again," and the precious grace passed by. How many a grace have I thrown away and lost forever! Then for the second time Pilate declared that he found "no cause in Him."

THIRD POINT.—"But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the Pasch. Will you therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" A foolish question indeed! "He knew that it was through envy they had delivered Him up." He knew that they were bent upon His

destruction; for when he had told them to judge Him according to their law they had answered: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." They could have stoned Him indeed as they stoned St. Stephen, setting at naught the Roman prohibition and stirring up a tumult against Him; but this would not have satisfied the intense hatred they had so long borne Him. They wanted Him to be executed by Roman law, because crucifixion was so much more cruel a death than stoning and they were in a hurry to see it done at once. All this Pilate knew when he made this childish proposition. Evidently he was at his wit's end. The priests, however, were wide awake. Pilate had shown his hand. It was clear that he wanted to rescue his prisoner from their vengeance; so they resolved to urge the people, when the time came, to clamor for Barabbas.

Colloquy with our King. The Creed.

MEDITATION XXVI

CHRIST BEFORE HEROD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus, being sent to Herod, is treated by him as a fool.

Mental Picture.—Silent and with eyes on the ground stands the Holy One of God in the midst of that depraved court.

Petition.—Hatred of the world.

FIRST POINT.—In the course of the interrogation it came out that Jesus was from Galilee; so Pilate seized eagerly on this opportunity of getting rid of an unpleasant case by transferring it to Herod, the tetrarch of that province, who chanced then to be in Jerusalem.

Now Herod, having heard much of Our Lord's miracles, was very anxious to see Him. This man was a thorough worldling, frivolous, sensual, utterly devoid of religion, and, like all his class, eager for new experiences to excite his jaded appetite for pleasure. Looking on Christ as a magician, he hoped to induce Him to exhibit His skill for his amusement. Zacheus also had greatly wished to see Jesus, and Jesus had accepted his hospitality. How will He deal with Herod?

SECOND POINT.—“And Herod questioned Him with many words; but He answered him nothing,” would not so much as look at him, and no wonder. This empty pleasure-seeker was the son of Herod the first, a monster of iniquity, who, among his other crimes, was guilty of the slaughter of the Innocents; and he had walked in his father's steps, for his own hands were red with the blood of St. John the Baptist. He was, moreover, an impure debauchee, living in open violation of the laws of God and man with his brother's wife. What marvel that Our Lord was silent?

“And the chief priests and the scribes stood by earnestly accusing Him.” It would have been easy to secure the friendship of Herod; but from such men Jesus Christ will accept nothing.

THIRD POINT.—“And Herod with his soldiers despised Him and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate.” So the Eternal Wisdom is treated as a fool. Shall I not bear a little shame, then, for His sake? “If any man among you seem to be wise in this world let him become as a fool, that he may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor. iii. 18).

Colloquy with Jesus put to scorn. *Anima Christi*, page 284.

MEDITATION XXVII

CHRIST OR BARABBAS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Pilate offers the people their choice between Our Lord and Barabbas. His wife sends him a warning message. The crowd chooses Barabbas and clamors for the death of Jesus.

Mental Picture.—Pilate, with Our Lord beside him, standing pale with fear before the howling mob.

Petition.—That I may always choose Jesus.

FIRST POINT.—“Now upon the solemn day the

governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would; and he had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas. They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" The priests and scribes have prepared the people for this offer, suggesting to them to reject Jesus; so now they cry out with one voice: "Not this man, but Barabbas." It was bad enough that such a choice should be offered; but that the Redeemer of men should be rejected and a murderer chosen in His stead was cruel, indeed. Yet is not this just what I am guilty of when I commit a mortal sin? It is a choice between Jesus and some vile animal lust, a robber, a murderer, who has already killed so many souls and robbed God of so much glory; and I cast off my Saviour and choose the murderer instead. After all this I may well ask myself: Why has not God rejected me?

SECOND POINT.—And as Pilate "was sitting on the judgment-seat his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with this just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream on account of Him."

Some think that this dream came from the devil, who by this time had come to realize that in his hatred of Christ he had overreached himself, for as much as Christ's death would set mankind free

from his tyranny and bring all his plans to utter ruin. But ever since the Temptation, as we have seen already, Satan had known that Jesus was the Son of God, and had again and again borne witness to Him. More probably, therefore, it was sent by God to give Pilate a solemn warning of the gravity of the crime to which he was on the point of lending his authority. But by this time the wretched man is thoroughly seared. His weakness has only infuriated the crowd, and now he stands pale and helpless before it; so the warning has no effect upon him.

It is precisely the same with us. When under the influence of strong passion we hear nothing, heed nothing, but are borne down as by a tidal wave or an avalanche. Yet even then, did we only pray, strength would be given us and we should be able to stand firm.

THIRD POINT.—“Pilate saith to them: What shall I do, then, with Jesus that is called Christ?” A strange question this for a judge to ask. What shall you do with Him? Why do Him justice, of course. Again and again throughout this trial you have declared Him innocent; what else can you do now but acquit Him? But the people all cried out: “Let Him be crucified.” “Why, what evil hath He done?” urged Pilate. “But they cried out the more: Let Him be crucified.” Ah, yes! Crucify Him because this earth of ours is reeking with the

sins of men, because every square foot of it has a long, long tale to tell of deeds of cruelty and deeds of shame. It has drunk in blood enough, God knows, this earth we live on, blood that called to God for vengeance and got it, blood that called to man for vengeance and got it, oh, how abundantly! but blood that called for mercy it has never known. It has been deluged with innocent blood, the blood of the patriot, even the blood of the martyr; but the blood of a Redeemer it has never tasted yet. The sin-soaked earth is thirsting for this blood.

Crucify Him because Cain hated Abel, because of the wickedness that brought about the Flood, because of the nameless abominations of the cities of the plain, because of the idolatries, and harlotries of the chosen people. Crucify Him because of the pride of the pharisee, the hollow-heartedness of the scribe, the filthiness of Herod's court, the cowardly injustice of Pilate. Crucify Him for the sins of Christian nations, for the sins of my own people, for my sins, O God, for my sins!

Then Pilate gave orders that Jesus should be scourged. This was the usual preliminary to crucifixion; yet Pilate still hoped that it might satisfy the people. "I will scourge Him," he had said, "and let Him go." How often have I said the same! How often have I flattered myself that I could gratify some sinful inclination to a certain point, and then stop! But one sin has led to an-

other, till, like Pilate, I have first scourged my Saviour and then crucified Him.

Colloquy with Christ rejected. What shall I do with Jesus? *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION XXVIII

THE SCOURGING

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him."

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour bound to a post awaiting punishment.

Petition.—Hatred of impurity.

FIRST POINT.—Had this punishment been inflicted under the Jewish law it could not have been exceeded forty stripes (*Deut.* xxv. 3). If Our Lord, like St. Paul, had been a Roman citizen, then, by Roman law, He could not have been scourged at all. As it was, He was chastised like a slave, and slaves often died under the lash.

A certain number of men are told off to scourge Him in relays. We see them throwing off their tunics, turning up their sleeves and each choosing out his whip or bundle of rods, as if they were making ready for a game. It is mere sport to them, and they laugh and jest as they make their preparations.

SECOND POINT.—Now they fall to. The rods come first, stripping the skin away; then the whips, loaded with lead or iron, till every part of that sacred body is crushed and mangled and the very bones laid bare, each well-aimed blow being applauded by the savage bystanders. At length they are all weary and the torture ceases; the rope is cut, and Jesus falls senseless to the ground. Then maybe they throw cold water on His face to bring Him to. He rises painfully, trembling in every limb, and is left to put on His garments as best He may.

THIRD POINT.—This fearful torment was the penalty for my sins of impurity. Every sensual action, every carnal desire was present to my dear Lord as He groaned under those merciless scourges. Can I ever dare to commit such sins again? Do I not grieve over them now? Am I not eager to take vengeance on this flesh, which through its selfish greed for pleasure has brought such cruel suffering on my Redeemer?

Colloquy with Jesus, the victim of my self-love. Anima Christi, page 284.

MEDITATION XXIX

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus, with a crown of thorns on His

head, a reed in His hand and a purple rag over His shoulders, is treated as a mock king and His face covered with spittle.

Mental Picture.—Quivering from that cruel scourging, our Saviour sits crouched up on a stool set against the wall.

Petition.—Patience under insult.

FIRST POINT.—The Gospel narrative reads as if this mock crowning was a sudden impulse of the soldiers; yet the crown, it seems probable, was not a few thorns hastily twisted into a circlet, but a cap or mitre covering the whole head, the thorns being woven into a broad fillet of rushes.¹ Such a thing would be the work of hours. A reed, again, is not to be found at a moment's notice nor in the heart of a city; it was most likely brought from the brook Kedron, outside the gates.

Everything, therefore, points to a preconceived design, due to the thoughtful cruelty of one of Our Lord's bitter enemies. From early morning he has had this crown woven and now sends it in together with the reed, and perhaps also the purple vestment. O my dear Lord, if the wicked hate Thee so intensely shall not I love Thee all the more? The soldiers take in at once the accursed humor of the thing: "He calls Himself a King, does He? Then we will give Him kingly honors."

SECOND POINT.—We are told that the whole co-

¹ C. R. de Flury, *Mémoire sur les Instruments de la Passion.*

hor~~t~~ was gathered together for this sport. Now the full tale of a Roman cohort was 600 men (three maniples); and, though some of this force may have been on duty in other parts of the city, we may be sure Pilate kept a strong body of soldiers about his person during the anxious days of the festival. A hundred men, then, at the least must have spat in Our Lord's face that day.

We see them falling in, two and two, in mock procession, laughing and jesting noisily the while, each couple in turn bending the knee before Him, striking His head with the reed and hawking up all the filth in their lungs to spit it in His blessed face. What a sight He must have been when that sport was over! Great God in heaven! this is Thy beloved Son in whom Thou art well pleased; how then canst Thou look down upon this scene and not destroy the world which thus illtreats Him?

THIRD POINT.—This is the atonement my Saviour offers for my pride. I hold my head so high; I stand so much on my dignity; I am so impatient under the smallest slight or insult; so my Lord must be humbled to the dust, mocked, and flouted, and spat upon. Oh, surely I will begin now to wage war upon this accursed pride of mine, to humble myself, and to welcome humiliation for love of my despised Redeemer.

Colloquy with Jesus, my true King. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION XXX

ECCE HOMO!

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Pilate, sending for Jesus, shows Him to the people. “Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment; and he saith to them: Behold the man.”

Mental Picture.—A sea of angry faces glaring up at Jesus.

Petition.—That I may do something by my love to make up for the hatred of Christ’s enemies.

FIRST POINT.—“Behold, I bring Him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him.” Strange irony this! Jesus has been scourged nearly to death, His head is crowned with thorns, His face caked with spittle; and all this is the proof of His innocence! “Behold the man,” the “man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity” (*Is. liii. 3*), the man who is the victim for the sins of men, the man to whose service you were sworn in Baptism, to whom you have so often declared your loyalty. Ah, what a caitiff knight you are! How can you look Him in the face?

SECOND POINT.—“Crucify Him. Crucify Him,” yells the crowd. “Take Him you and crucify Him,” answers the craven-hearted judge; “for I find no cause in Him.” “We have a law,” they

ery, "and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Hearing these words, Pilate "fears the more," and entering the hall again he questions Jesus: "Whence art Thou?" But when Our Lord had spoken to him of truth he would not listen; so now He gives no answer. How terrible may be the consequences of the neglect of one great grace! "Pilate therefore saith to Him: Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee and I have power to release Thee?" This false claim called for a rebuke; so Jesus answered: "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that hath delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin." A solemn warning this for Pilate, and the last. The Jews are now about to use an argument which will bear down his feeble resistance.

THIRD POINT.—"If thou release this man," say they, "thou art not Cæsar's friend; for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." This was shameless enough in all conscience. They hated Cæsar and were always on the watch for an opportunity to throw off his yoke; but they were resolved at any cost to bring about our Saviour's death. Pilate, hearing this, brought Jesus forth again and, sitting on the judgment-seat, said:

“Behold your king. But they cried out: Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar.” This cry, no doubt, was taken up by the mob, and thus it was that the whole Jewish nation ratified the decree of their council, renounced their allegiance to the God of their fathers, and thenceforth ceased to be His people: “The people that shall deny Him shall not be His” (*Dan.* ix. 26).

Colloquy with Christ, our king. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION XXXI

THE SENTENCE OF DEATH

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Pilate now gives way and, washing his hands before the people, condemns Our Lord to death.

Mental Picture.—Pilate washing his hands.

Petition.—That Christ’s precious blood may be on me, not in wrath, but in mercy.

FIRST POINT.—To be the friend of Cæsar was everything to Pilate. He knew that if he let Jesus go his action would be misrepresented at Rome and he might very possibly fall into disgrace; so,

to save his worldly honor, he violated his conscience and passed an unjust sentence. How many men have lost their souls, like Pilate, through love for the world and its honors! "Know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God" (*James* iv. 4).

SECOND POINT.—Then, "taking water, he washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man. Look you to it." Did he really think he was innocent? Most assuredly not. By not taking a firm stand at the outset, when it would have been easy, he had got himself into a position of great difficulty; yet, for all that, his yielding in the end was a deliberate act. Let me learn to withstand temptation before it gathers strength and becomes imperious, overbearing.

"I will chastise Him," he had said, "and let Him go"; yet he did not let Him go, but, having scourged Him, sent Him to death. And so it is with us. We fancy that we can expose ourselves to temptation and even consent to venial sin, and then when mortal sin comes in sight cry halt; but our passions, like the bloodthirsty Jewish crowd, sweep us along before them, and we, too, scourge Jesus and then yield Him up to death.

"Yet, if he was guilty who did this against his

will, were they innocent who forced him to do it?" (St. Augustine in *Ps. xliii.*)

"Look you to it." The very words the chief priests and ancients had used that morning to the wretched Judas are now cast back at themselves.

THIRD POINT.—"And the whole people answering said: His blood be upon us and upon our children." Those very children whose innocent voices but a few days back were singing: "Hosanna to the Son of David." "And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required; and he released unto them him who for murder and sedition had been cast into prison; but Jesus he delivered up to their will." So the good Jesus is condemned to death, and why? That I may not be condemned at the last day. His condemnation is my acquittal; His death my life. "He hath loved me, and delivered Himself for me" (*Gal. ii. 20*).

Colloquy with Jesus sentenced to die. May Thy blood, sweet Lord, be in mercy upon us and upon our children. *Anima Christi*, page 284.

MEDITATION XXXII

THE WAY OF THE CROSS—I

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus receives His cross and falls un-

der its weight. He meets His Mother. Simon of Cyrene helps Him.

Mental Picture.—The meeting of Jesus and Mary.

Petition.—Love of the cross.

FIRST POINT.—A man condemned to crucifixion was made to bear his cross to the place of execution, that is, the transverse beam of it; for the upright post was either erected beforehand or carried thither on a cart. This crossbeam was a stout piece of timber some eight feet long, a heavy load for one so exhausted as Our Lord was. He receives it in gladness of heart; for has He not been looking forward to it all His life long? The thought of it in the garden filled Him with terror; but “love is strong as death” (*Cant.* viii. 6). “Perfect charity casteth out fear” (1 *John* iv. 18). The two thieves are also loaded with their crosses and the procession sets forth. A cart leads the way carrying the ladders and the three long beams; then come the executioners with ropes and heavy hammers and huge nails, which are to be driven with those hammers into human flesh, and last of all the three victims. But Jesus has gone but a few paces when He stumbles and falls. The wood is lifted from His shoulder, and He is raised and set on His feet.

SECOND POINT.—At this moment He sees His blessed Mother trying to approach Him. Their

eyes just meet and then she is pushed rudely aside and the soldiers hurry Him along.

Poor broken-hearted Mother! Years ago it had been a rapturous happiness to look forward to His birth; but it was a deeper joy still to see Him lying on her breast, to press her lips to His. So now, though it has been agony untold to look forward to His passion, it is far more terrible than she ever thought it would be. Many a time has she tried to picture this scene to herself; but she never imagined her Jesus would look like this, torn, crushed, and beaten almost out of recognition even by her, His own Mother. Thus is the anguish of a lifetime's fearful anticipation concentrated in a single look.

THIRD POINT.—It is now quite evident that unless He is dealt with more gently, our Saviour will die upon the way, and that is not at all the intention of His enemies. Just at this moment Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, meets the crowd surging out of the city, and, catching sight of his beloved Master—for everything tends to show that he was a disciple—is moved, like the Good Samaritan, with compassion. The high priests mark his sympathy for their victim and that is enough for them. “Make this man help Him,” they cry. So Simon is forced to carry the cross “after Jesus;” that is to say, they carry it between them. Our Lady sees what is done and

blesses Simon from her heart. Who would not wish to share in Mary's blessing? Who would not gladly help Jesus to carry His cross?

Colloquy with Jesus and His Mother. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION XXXIII

THE WAY OF THE CROSS—II

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Veronica wipes Our Lord's face. He falls again. He speaks to the women at the gate. He falls a third time.

Mental Picture.—Veronica approaching our Saviour.

Petition.—That I may give my Lord some comfort in His bitter sufferings.

FIRST POINT.—Women throughout the passion come to the front, showing without fear their sympathy for our Saviour. Tradition has preserved a touching incident that now befell. A lady of Jerusalem, named Veronica, seeing Our Lord's exhaustion and His face covered with blood and filth, comes forward to offer Him a handkerchief. Jesus accepts it and, having wiped His face, returns it to her with the impress of His sacred countenance upon it. Our Lady sees this also, and

how she blesses the loving devotion of Veronica! She blesses every one who does anything for Jesus. Shortly after this Our Lord falls again.

SECOND POINT.—At the gate of the city there is a slight delay. A group of women are mourning for Jesus of Nazareth and He stops to speak to them; for it is not in the power of His executioners to hurry Him on when it is His will to stay. “Daughters of Jerusalem,” He says, “weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; for, behold, the days shall come wherein you will say: Blessed are the barren and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us, and to the hills: Cover us; for if in the green wood”—that is in His own innocent flesh—“they do these things what shall be done in the dry?”

We see how in the midst of His own sufferings our Good Shepherd is thinking only of His sheep. The awful chastisement that overhangs His nation, the eternal fate in store for all who die in sin—all this and much more beside lies heavy on His heart.

THIRD POINT.—At the foot of Calvary He falls a third time; but they drag Him up the slope, a short ascent, yet how painful! I have often toiled up a much higher hill than this in the hope of

seeing a fine view from its summit; but the only prospect before Jesus Christ is the nailing of His hands and feet and the three hours' agony.

At last the top is reached, and the executioners fall to work at once; for there is no time to lose. All must be over by sundown, the bodies must be taken away and buried, and the divine victim is eager too: "What thou dost, do quickly."

Colloquy with the Lamb of God, the victim of sin. Agnus Dei, page 282.

MEDITATION XXXIV

JESUS NAILED ON THE CROSS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"They crucified Him and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst."

Mental Picture.—Jesus with hands outstretched waiting for the first blow of the hammer.

Petition.—That with Christ I may be nailed to the cross.

FIRST POINT.—While the two beams of the cross are being fastened together our Saviour is offered wine mingled with gall or myrrh, "which when He had tasted He would not drink"; for the effect would have been to stupefy as well as to strengthen Him.

After this He is stripped of His clothes, which have now become glued to His wounds, so that the pain is very great, and no attempt is made to lessen it. Then lying down on the cross He stretches forth His hands to be nailed. The crowd presses round, those behind craning their necks to see over the shoulders of those in front. The thieves attract less attention; for they are but common criminals, and they are only to be bound to their gibbets, whereas Christ is to be nailed, and the cruel sport is always the popular one.

A huge nail is now placed on the palm of the right hand and with one swinging blow is driven through it into the wood; then stroke follows stroke, sending it well home. Then the left hand and then the feet are fastened in like manner.¹

SECOND POINT.—The blessed Mother is standing at the foot of the little hill, unable to get nearer by reason of the crowd. She does not hear the first blow; but the second, third, and fourth she hears as they drive the nails home into the hard wood, carrying the skin and flesh of her Son with them. Ah, think what each stroke of the hammer meant to her! Now amid shouts of delight and

¹ The above is the traditional conception of Our Lord's crucifixion. The ordinary process, however, was first to nail the hands on the crossbeam and then to haul the body up with ropes till it rested on a crutch or saddle fixed on the upright post. The crossbeam was then fastened in position and the feet were drawn together and nailed.

derision the cross is raised, her beloved impaled upon it. She watches, poor Mother, as its foot is dragged along the rough ground and then dropped suddenly into the deep hole dug for it, and anon comes the driving in of stakes to steady it, every jolt and blow causing new agony to the patient victim.

THIRD POINT.—Now the centurion and his men force the crowd back, and slowly, with the help of John and Magdalen, she moves up through that dense throng to take her appointed place beneath the gibbet of her Son.

“And they that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads. . . . And the chief priests and ancients mocking said: He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the king of Israel let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusted in God; let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him; for He said: I am the Son of God.” There was truth in this bitter gibe. He could not save Himself; love would not let Him; for to save Himself was to lose me.

The Twenty-first Psalm, from which these last words come, is the very one from which Jesus took that piteous cry: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” It is throughout prophetic of His passion: “They have dug My hands and My feet . . . they have parted My garments

among them.” The verse they cite is introduced thus: “All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head.” This is just what they are now doing as they witness the exact fulfilment of what their prophet foretold; and yet they dare to quote his words against their victim.

Meantime the soldiers are unconsciously fulfilling the prediction. “They parted My garments amongst them and upon My vesture they cast lots.” That seamless vesture, emblem of the indivisible unity of the Church, was woven by Mary herself. “They said then one to another: Let us not cut it; but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be.” What those pagan soldiers dared not do the schismatic does without remorse, when he essays to rend the unity of God’s holy Church.

Colloquy with Christ crucified. En ego, page 288.

MEDITATION XXXV

THE TITLE ON THE CROSS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—“And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross; and the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Mental Picture.—The crowd reading this title.

Petition.—That Jesus of Nazareth may be king of my heart.

FIRST POINT.—*Jesus.* This holy name means Saviour. It was decreed for Him before His birth: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins” (*Matt.* i. 21). It was solemnly given to Him at His circumcision, when His precious blood was first shed. Now He is pouring forth that blood to the last drop; the work of Redemption will soon be complete. It is a glorious name. “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father” (*Philipp.* ii. 8).

Of Nazareth.—This reminds us of the life of humble toil now ending in such a cruel and shameful death. He has been poor and in labors from His youth. He has lived only to do the will of His Father, and He does it to the end.

King. 1. By inheritance, as the Son of His eternal Father: “I am appointed king by Him over Sion, His holy mountain” (*Psa.* ii. 6).

2. By nature, having all the qualities of a king

—wisdom, justice, power, mercy, a royal mind and heart. He is every inch a king.

3. By conquest: “Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty. With Thy comeliness and Thy beauty, set out, proceed prosperously, and reign” (*Ps.* xliv. 4, 5). “The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand till I make Thy enemies Thy footstool” (*Ps.* cix. 1).

Of the Jews. The very title the Magi had given Him at His birth: “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” But the Jews would not have Him. “We will not have this man to reign over us” (*Luke* xix. 14). “He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name” (*John* i. 11, 12).

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord’s kingdom is “not of this world”; yet He is to reign over the hearts of men to the end of time, and so the inscription “was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin,” to show forth His universal dominion over the souls His blood has redeemed.

And I have sworn fealty to Him, again and again, declaring Him my king and my God. If I have proved unfaithful and disloyal, let me now return to my allegiance, and serve Him henceforth with all my heart, all my mind, and all my strength.

THIRD POINT.—“Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not the king of the Jews, but that He said I am the king of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written I have written.” Here Pilate shows a firmness we should not have expected of him. He has yielded on every other point; he will not yield on this; but his firmness is not his own. It is the Holy Spirit that forbids him to make any change. These words are to remain forever in condemnation of the Jews and of all who, like them, refuse to acknowledge the King of kings.

Colloquy with Jesus of Nazareth, King of my heart. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION XXXVI

THE FIRST WORD FROM THE CROSS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—“And Jesus said,” or rather went on saying: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Mental Picture.—The cross has been raised; the blood is gushing from our Saviour’s hands and feet.

Petition.—“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

FIRST POINT.—All this time Jesus has gone on

repeating these words, the most wonderful He ever uttered, teaching the world, as St. Augustine says, from the pulpit of the cross, teaching by example what He had so often inculcated by word of mouth. He has told us that we must forgive, not seven times only, but seventy times seven, that with what measure we mete it shall be measured to us again. It is a hard lesson for corrupt human nature to learn, so He makes it easier for us by His own beautiful forgiveness.

SECOND POINT.—“They know not what they do.” Oh, the marvel of it! Do they not know? The Roman soldiers of course know not; how can they? but the Jewish people, their leaders above all, surely they can not be excused. In truth they know enough to make them terribly guilty; yet they know not as they might know, as they will know some day. And so He finds excuse even for them, pleads for them all, offering His blood in atonement for their sin, like the Good Shepherd that He is. “He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors” (*Is. liii. 12*).

THIRD POINT.—I also was included in that prayer; yet how could He find excuse for me? I am a Christian. I have received so many sacraments, such a wealth of grace. I know so much more than they who brought about His death. Yes, I know indeed, and yet I know not. When

I stand before Him for judgment, then at last I shall understand what sin means. So my good Jesus pleads for me: "He knows not what he does."

And He would have me forgive even as He has forgiven me. Have I got this lesson into my heart? Shall I ever master it? Yet how dare I say the "Our Father" unless I forgive? Is it not to call down God's vengeance on myself?

Colloquy with our most forgiving Lord. Our Father.

MEDITATION XXXVII

THE SECOND WORD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Mental Picture.—The penitent thief gazing on his dying Saviour.

Petition.—Faith and repentance.

FIRST POINT.—Every one about the cross is blaspheming and reviling, and the two thieves from their crosses join in. Hardened ruffians they, dying impenitent deaths. What should they know about Jesus of Nazareth? All the world says He is an impostor, so of course it must be

true. He calls Himself the Christ, the Son of God; a merry jest to be sure. So in the midst of their own agony they laugh at Him: "If Thou art Christ save Thyself and us."

But presently one of them catches that marvelous prayer of forgiveness. "Great God! instead of cursing His tormentors, as we do, He is asking pardon for them! Impossible, unless He is what He claims to be. Of a truth it must be the promised Messiah." So the scoffer stops his ribaldry and listens. Again the same words. Then in quick succession, as faith enters his soul, he strives to silence his fellow, confesses his own guilt, proclaims the innocence of Christ: "Neither dost thou fear God, seeing that thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil." Grace has been offered and accepted, and now it comes back in full flood, bringing complete faith with it. This man dying beside him is his King, his God. One mass of wounds as he sees Him, He is on the point of entering into His kingdom. Upon no earthly throne will He ever sit. His kingdom is not of this world but of heaven. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

SECOND POINT.—"And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." This dying criminal is con-

scious of a long life of sin; he does not dream that he can enter at once into God's kingdom; all he craves is to be remembered in his place of exile. And Christ's reply grants much more than is asked; not only will He remember His fellow-sufferer, but in reward of his great faith and contrition bring him this very day into paradise. His cruel death in union with that of his Saviour shall be taken in full atonement for the shameful past.

THIRD POINT.—On Calvary we learn that suffering is the law under which we all have to live, a law no child of Adam can hope to evade; for here we see three crucified together, the innocent, the hardened sinner, the humble penitent. Suffering, therefore, being unavoidable, we should try to get some good out of it, and when borne for Christ and with Christ how rich in blessings it is! With what giant strides we can tread the ways of holiness when we are nailed upon the cross with Christ!

Colloquy with Christ, our hope. “O Lord, remember me.” *Act of Hope.*

MEDITATION XXXVIII

THE THIRD WORD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—“When Jesus therefore had seen His

Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved He saith to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.”

Mental Picture.—The Blessed Virgin and John on either side of the cross.

Petition.—That I may take her to my own, as she has taken me.

FIRST POINT.—From the poor criminal steeped till this moment in iniquity our Saviour turns to His sinless Mother. She is standing now close to Him and John at the other side. “Woman,” He says. Ah, what a beautiful name to those who believe in the Incarnation! What name can become her so well? It is her prophetic name, her official title: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman.” It is this name that gives her her right to be here, the second Eve by the side of the second Adam. “Behold the man,” said Pilate. Behold the woman, too, through whom He became man.¹

SECOND POINT.—“Behold thy son. Behold thy mother.” John stands there for all of us; and what a gift is this last bequest of the Sacred Heart! We might have thought He had nothing further to give. “What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it?” (*Is.*

¹ Compare the Marriage at Cana, Vol. I, page 218.

v. 4.) Yet there is one gift left, and He knows well the value of it. It is the dearest treasure He possesses, dearer to Him than His own heart's blood. "Behold thy mother. What she has been to Me, that she shall be to each one of you. Be you her children, and she, the Mother of your God, shall be a mother to you."

THIRD POINT.—"And from that hour the disciple took her to his own." I, too, will take her to my own, loving her for her own sake and for His who died for me. She gave Him to me. She became His Mother to redeem me from death and hell. The precious blood He shed for me once ran in her pure veins and gushed from her virgin heart. O Mother of my God made man, be thou my mother and I will always be thy loving and devoted child.

Colloquy with Jesus and Mary. Stabat Mater, page 304.

MEDITATION XXXIX

THE FOURTH WORD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani; My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Mental Picture.—A great darkness has come on; we can hardly see Our Lord now.

Petition.—That in the hour of death I may not be forsaken.

FIRST POINT.—From the moment of the crucifixion a preternatural gloom had begun to gather over the sky, growing deeper and deeper as the hours wore on, and chilling every heart with awe and foreboding. The crowd dispersed; many went home striking their breasts, conscious now that a great crime had been committed. A few of Our Lord's most savage persecutors remained to see the end and to taunt Him even in the moment of death. The centurion and his soldiers were still on duty, and our Lady, John, and the little band of devoted women were gathered about their dying Saviour, the silence being broken only by the sobs of Magdalen and her fellow mourners.

SECOND POINT.—Meantime the Heart of Christ is breaking with unutterable sorrow. His bodily tortures have hitherto veiled the anguish of His soul; but it has gone on all the while as we saw it in Gethsemani. He no longer sweats blood, for His blood has free passage now by a thousand open wounds and is nearly exhausted; but the same heavy load of weariness and grief is weighing on His heart, the sins of men, their cruel ingratitude and indifference, the waste of His precious blood through the loss of countless souls for

whom He has shed it so unstintingly. It was decreed that the chalice should not pass away and so He is drinking it to the dregs. His soul is sorrowful even unto death; He has gone down into utter darkness.

THIRD POINT.—“My God, My God,” He cries, “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (*Ps.* xxi. 2.) To His heavenly Father He is always unspeakably dear; there can be no real separation between them; yet, in some way we cannot understand, for He always enjoyed the Beatific Vision, from His human soul the light of God’s countenance is now hidden by a dense cloud of sadness. His cry comes out of the depths, and His Father seems not to hear.

Why should our dear Lord endure this terrible abandonment? That at my last hour God may not abandon me. The darkness of Christ’s soul is the light of mine; His desolation is my eternal hope.

Colloquy with Christ forsaken. De Profundis, page 290.

MEDITATION XL

THE FIFTH WORD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—“Afterward, Jesus, knowing that all

things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst."

Mental Picture.—The soldier pressing the sponge against our Saviour's lips.

Petition.—That I may know how to comfort my Lord in His thirst.

FIRST POINT.—Some of the priests and elders must have been still on the spot; for no one else could have thought of turning into ridicule that piteous cry of desolation. They were perfectly familiar with the words of the psalm; yet they chose to pretend that the cry, "Eli, Eli," "My God, My God," was meant for Elias. "This man," they say, "calleth Elias."

Meantime a soldier, hearing Christ say, "I thirst," came up with a sponge filled with vinegar, the acid wine provided for the soldiers, which he had set upon a reed, that he might moisten the parched lips of our dying Saviour. This, we may well believe, was kindly meant. It was the only act of consideration shown to Our Lord by His executioners, and was no doubt richly rewarded. But the Jews cried out: "Let be. Let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him."

SECOND POINT.—Nevertheless the soldier reached up the sponge and pressed it against Our Lord's mouth. "In My thirst," sang the Psalmist, "they gave Me vinegar to drink" (*Ps. lxxiii. 22*).

Our Saviour's thirst must have been terrible indeed. Nothing had passed His lips since He left the supper chamber the evening before; for, though He had tasted the soothing potion offered to Him before His crucifixion, "He would not drink"; and now for more than twelve hours He has been suffering and bleeding continuously. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws and Thou hast brought me down into the dust of death" (*Ps. xxi. 16*).

THIRD POINT.—Fearful as was Our Lord's bodily thirst, that of His soul was far harder to bear. As the hart pants after the waterbrooks, so did He long for the love of men; yet how often was this to be denied Him! How many would give Him the vinegar of ingratitude instead of the hearty loyalty He had earned so well! How have I treated Him? What do I mean to do henceforth?

Colloquy with Jesus thirsting for my love.
Stabat Mater, page 304.

MEDITATION XLI

THE LAST TWO WORDS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Jesus therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said: It is finished."

Mental Picture.—The stillness of death surrounds the cross. The last moment has come.

Petition.—That I may offer myself to God in union with my Saviour.

FIRST POINT.—“It is finished.” He had asked in one of His parables: “Which of you having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it?” (*Luke* xiv. 28.) Christ our Lord has reckoned the charges. It was a costly work He undertook; but He has not shrunk from the outlay. He has finished it and paid for it with the last drop of His heart’s blood; and now He can say with truth, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.”

Divine Love can do no more. One drop of this blood would have been too great a price for the whole world, and He has spent it all, “for with Him there is plentiful redemption” (*Ps.* cxxix). All the prophecies and types are fulfilled. The Paschal Lamb has been sacrificed. The Son of man has been lifted up, as the serpent was in the desert, for the healing of the nations. He has been “wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins.” They have dug His hands and feet; they have numbered all His bones. It is finished.

SECOND POINT.—“And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” The cloud of desolation has passed away. The heavenly Father is looking down with infinite love on that beloved Son in whom He is

well pleased. In peace in the selfsame He shall sleep and He shall rest; for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled Him in hope (*P's.* iv). "Did you know that I must be about My Father's business?" are the first recorded words of our good Jesus, and these are the last: "My work is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Grant me, dear Lord, to be zealous for the glory of my God, that with my last breath I may be able to resign my soul into His keeping with the love and confidence of a good son going home to his father.

THIRD POINT.—"And, bowing His head, He gave up the ghost."

St. John Chrysostom points out that, if a dying man's head is propped up, first death takes place and then the head falls forward by its own weight, the spirit of life being no longer there to support it. With our Saviour it is not so. He first bows His head and then gives up the ghost, to show that He dies of His own will. "I lay down My life," He tells us, "that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself; and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again" (*John* x. 17). What return can I make for a love like this? "He hath loved me, and hath delivered Himself for me" (*Gal.* ii. 20). "Greater love than this no man

hath that a man lay down his life for his friends” (*John* xv. 13).

“Jesus by His death hath destroyed him who had power over death, and so hath set them free who through fear of death were under his slavery.” So sings the Church in one of her antiphons. And yet again: “When Life on the cross met death, death was slain.” The death of Christ, then, has taken all death’s bitterness away; for “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting” (*John* iii. 14, 15). “Who is this serpent lifted up? The death of Christ on the cross; for because the serpent’s bite was death, by the image of the serpent death was signified. The bite of the serpent gave death; the death of Our Lord gives life. Look up at the serpent, that the serpent may not hurt you. What is this? Look up at death, that death may do you no harm. But whose death? The death of Life. Is not Christ Life? Yet Christ is dead.” (Aug. on *John* iii.)

Colloquy with Jesus dying for me. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION XLII

THE PIERCING OF CHRIST'S SIDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"When they saw that He was already dead they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water."

Mental Picture.—The great gash in Christ's side, giving passage to His loving Heart.

Petition.—Love of Jesus.

FIRST POINT.—"And behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent. . . . Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed, this was the Son of God."

All Nature bears witness to its dead Lord, the pagan Romans confess Him, the people go home smiting their breasts, and yet their priests and elders are unmoved. "They besought Pilate" that the legs of the crucified "might be broken and that they might be taken away."

SECOND POINT.—But it is written of Christ, under the type of the paschal lamb: "Neither shall you break a bone thereof" (*Ex.* xii. 46). It is written again: "They shall look upon Me, whom

they have pierced" (*Zach.* xii. 10). So one of the soldiers opened His side with a spear. Deep and wide was the wound the broad lance-head made; St. Thomas later on could put his hand into it. That wound has laid open to us the burning Heart of our Redeemer, that, entering in, we may know how much He has loved us and learn to love Him in return. "Thou lovest; Thou art not loved; oh, would that Thou wert loved."

THIRD POINT.—"And immediately there came out blood and water," the water, as the Fathers teach, being a symbol of Baptism, the blood of the mystery of the altar; and so the Church is brought forth from the side of Christ, now asleep in death, just as Eve from the side of the sleeping Adam.

Let us kneel down and adore the dead body of our God and Saviour, thanking Him from our hearts for all He has done for us. What He really looked like we hardly dare to think. If our crucifixes showed Him as He was we should turn sick and look another way. "We have thought Him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (*Is.* liii. 4).

Yet we can take up a crucifix and examine it, discuss the pose of the limbs, the expression of

the face, treat it, in fact, as a mere work of art and lay it down without a sigh!

Colloquy with our God and Redeemer. En ego, page 288.

MEDITATION XLIII

THE ENTOMBMENT

Preparatory Prayer, as above.

History.—Joseph and Nicodemus take down the sacred body and, hurriedly but reverently embalming it, lay it in the tomb.

Mental Picture.—The sad procession to the sepulchre.

Petition.—Sympathy and love for the bereaved Mother.

FIRST POINT.—Stand by and watch the little band of disciples as they perform this last solemn office over their beloved Master, or rather yourself take part with them. The wounds in His hands have become so enlarged by the great weight upon them that we can draw them over the nails; but the nails through His feet we must force out. Oh, how deep they have gone into the wood! At last they are loosened and removed, and then gently and reverently we lower the body of our Saviour to the ground and lay His head on His Mother's breast.

Now we wash those gaping wounds and, taking

off the thorny crown—though many of the thorns are embedded so deep that we can not draw them out—we cleanse the filth and blood from His sacred face and, laying His arms by His sides, we swathe Him in His winding-sheet. When He came on earth He was wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger; now He is to be laid in His tomb.

SECOND POINT.—Meanwhile the holy Virgin is bowed in grief over the dead body of her Son. She has wept in silence till now; but now see how she sobs, poor broken-hearted Mother! She tries to take out those thorns fastened in His brow; but her tears blind her and she has to leave it to others. She is thinking of Him as He slept on her bosom at Bethlehem, as a boy at Nazareth, so beautiful, so lovable, so dear to God and to men. For more than thirty years she has foreseen the pitiful end of it all, and now it has come; her Jesus lies dead in her arms. “O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow” (*Lam. i. 12*).

And all this is my doing! My sins demanded this awful atonement! How can Mary ever forgive me? Yet Jesus, I know, has forgiven me and with His last breath bequeathed her to me as my own mother. So I mingle my tears of penitence with her tears of love, knowing that she will be a mother to me.

THIRD POINT.—And now we lift our sacred burden up, the blessed Mother following, and carry it to the sepulchre hewn out of the rock. There we lay it down for the angels to take charge of till the hour of its glorious resurrection. We close the entrance with a great stone and go our ways, never to forget this hour with all its heart-rending sorrow, never to forget the divine friend, who, “having loved His own who were in the world, loved them unto the end” (*John* xiii. 1).

Colloquy with Christ's desolate Mother. Stabat Mater, page 303.

MEDITATION XLIV

THE THREE SOLITUDES

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Christ's dead body lies alone in the tomb, Mary is alone with her sorrow, the apostles are alone with theirs in the cenaculum.

Mental Picture.—The sacred body lying stark and cold, wrapped in its grave-clothes.

Petition.—Deep love and sorrow.

FIRST POINT.—I kneel down in adoration by the body of my Saviour; what a wreck it is! It is covered with its winding-sheet; but I mark the dark stains of blood about the hands and feet, the head and side. I recall what it looked like when we low-

ered it from the cross, an utter ruin of the most glorious humanity that ever was. Beautiful He was "above the sons of men" (*Ps.* xliv. 3); but now "there is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness" (*Is.* liii. 2).

This fearful havoc has been wrought by my sins; "for the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (*Is.* liii. 6). In this mangled body, then, I read, as in a book, the gravity of sin, the holiness of God, and His eternal love; for sin needed this atonement, God's holiness demanded it, and God's love gave it. "Not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins" (1 *John* iv. 10). "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven," and was incarnate, and died.

SECOND POINT.—Then I go to visit the desolate Mother. St. John has taken her to a little house, just within the walls, belonging probably to Joseph of Arimathea. Here she lies prostrate and motionless, covered with her veil, weeping now, oh, how bitterly! She is alone; but her solitude is invaded by all sorts of horrible forms and sounds. Savage eyes glare upon her, wild voices are yelling death to her Son, every scene of that terrible three hours is burned into her soul. She knows He will rise again; but till He comes back to her from the grave she will see Him crucified still. She is enduring an agony something like

that her divine Son went through in Gethsemani. Let us leave her alone with her grief, for God alone can comfort her sad heart.

THIRD POINT.—Then I pay a visit to the poor, scared apostles in the supper-chamber, and I find them huddled together, speaking in whispers and trembling at every sound. Who is to be their leader now? They look to Peter; but he is sad and silent, quite crushed beneath the weight of his own great sorrow. John comes to them and gives the first history of the passion. With what breathless and wondering interest they hang on his words! The prayer of Christ for His murderers, the pardon of the Good Thief, the third word—they understand it all, and what consolation it brings them! Then the long, silent agony. Some of them recall that in the Garden, and how He looked then. The loud cry: “Eli, Eli.” They know the psalm well, and one of them recites it, his words being often interrupted with sobs and tears. How they grieve they were not there! How many questions they have to ask!

Peter then returns with John to visit our blessed Lady. Let me go with him and ask her forgiveness and mercy for myself. There she still lies on the stone floor of the little room. John helps her to rise and, as she faces them, both are struck with her resemblance to Jesus as He appeared on Thursday night in the Garden of Olives. Peter

falls weeping at her feet, and she comforts him by recalling the three first words of yesterday, promises to be his mother, reminds him how dear he always was to his Master. She has a kind and motherly word for me also; and so we both go away consoled.

Colloquy with the Mother of Sorrows. Stabat Mater, page 304.

PART V

THE UNITIVE WAY

Christ's Glorified Life

INTRODUCTION

THE meditations of the Unitive Way have for their object that union with God of which the Apostle writes: "He who is joined to God is one spirit" (1 *Cor.* vi. 17). It can, of course, be attained only by the perfect; nevertheless the beginner in his measure should strive to reach it. It implies a triple conformation of intellect, will, and life.

The first has this effect, that we carry God about with us, our memory entertaining Him, our thoughts being wholly occupied with Him, till at last He so permeates the very fibre of our intelligence as to render it a living image of Himself. "We all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 *Cor.* iii. 18).

In the second the will fastens itself upon that which has so captivated the intellect and cleaves

to it with all its might, according to what our Saviour calls the first and greatest commandment : “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with all thy strength and with all thy mind” (*Luke* x. 27). Hence follows admiration of His supreme majesty and perfection, joy in God Himself and in His works, thanksgiving for His many gifts, desire to see Him, to honor and obey Him, and to bring all men to do the same, confidence in His goodness and providence, fear—not servile fear; for “perfect charity casteth out fear” (1 *John* iv. 18); but filial fear which makes us dread to be separated from Him or to do anything to offend so great a majesty, causing us moreover to grieve for love of Him over every sin whereby in the past we have incurred His just displeasure.

The third results in perfect conformity of our will with the divine will, so that we accept adversity and prosperity with equal joy; and this involves the practice of every virtue and leads speedily to Christian perfection, which consists in making man the living image of his Maker.

The object therefore of the meditations that follow is the knowledge of God, that, knowing Him, we may rejoice in the love of His goodness and in union with His will. But, as Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, whereby alone we can come to the perfect knowledge and love of His Father, they deal first with the life of Christ risen

and glorified, a contemplation specially suited to perfect souls.

MEDITATION I

THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HELL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The moment Our Lord's blessed soul left His body it went down to comfort the spirits of the just who were waiting for Him in Limbo.

Mental Picture.—The soul of Christ entering the lower world. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (*Is.* ix. 2).

Petition.—"Come, Lord Jesus" (*Apoc.* xxii. 20).

FIRST POINT.—Limbo is a Latin word meaning a fringe or border. It is applied by traditional usage to that place lying on the outskirts of the lower regions which the Jews seem to have known as "Abraham's bosom." Here were gathered together all the souls of those who had died in the Lord and, being now free from sin, were waiting for Christ to take them to heaven.

These blessed spirits must have been wrought up to a state of intense excitement. They had long known that their Saviour was on earth. Holy Simeon had come to tell them how he had held the divine Child in his arms; Anna and many others had seen Him. Then came St. Joseph with the

story of His childhood and youth, St. John who had baptized Him and pointed Him out as the Lamb of God. The whole of creation was stirred to its depths at His death, and we may be sure it was felt in Limbo. Now the long-expected moment has come and Christ Himself appears.

SECOND POINT.—He was presently followed by that poor thief who had hung on the cross beside Him. “This day,” had He said, “thou shalt be with Me in paradise”; and paradise it really is, for now God is there filling every soul with heavenly joy.

See with what worshipful love they gather about Him. They are not afraid; for He is one of themselves, a real human soul, though united to the Divinity, all love and tenderness, greeting them every one as His friends: “I will not now call you servants . . . but I have called you friends” (*John* xv. 15). “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you” (*John* xvi. 22).

THIRD POINT.—We may well believe that those in purgatory were there and then liberated, that they might have part in this great joy; but to the lost there came no gladness. He died for them, too; but by their obstinate rejection of His grace they had made His death of no avail, and His descent into the world of spirits only filled them with terror.

What is my feeling toward Jesus Christ? Is the thought of meeting Him a joy or not? Can I say from my heart: "Come, Lord Jesus?"

Colloquy with Christ, the Prince of Peace. Anima Christi, page 284.

MEDITATION II

THE RESURRECTION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Christ Our Lord raises His body to life and leaves the sepulchre. An earthquake follows, and an angel rolls away the stone from the mouth of the tomb.

Mental Picture.—Christ's body glorified as on Mount Tabor.

Petition.—Great joy with Him.

FIRST POINT.—Early on Easter Sunday morning before the sun is risen our Saviour returns from Limbo accompanied by a vast multitude of happy spirits. Bringing them to the sepulchre, He shows them His torn and mangled body. With what wonder and thankfulness they gaze upon it! Some of them long since foretold what now they see verified. "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed" (*Is. liii. 5*). "They have dug my

hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones” (*Ps.* xxi. 18). With them I contemplate the body of my Redeemer and join in their hymn of praise and thanksgiving: “Thou hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation” (*Apoc.* v. 9).

SECOND POINT.—Suddenly, while they are still gazing on that lifeless body, the soul of Christ enters into it, raising it up to glorious life. The face which a moment before was so disfigured, those red, gaping wounds in hands, feet, and side, now shine like the sun; His garments are white as driven snow; every vestige of shame and suffering has disappeared; He stands in their midst all beautiful and glorified. Then at once, as a ray of light through a crystal, He passes forth through the huge stone that closes the tomb; and they all follow Him rejoicing in the glory of their risen Lord. Shall not I share in that great joy? Christ is risen, alleluia!

THIRD POINT.—“And behold there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and, coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And His countenance was as lightning, and His raiment as snow; and for fear of Him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men” (*Matt.* xxviii. 2-4). This same angel who now appears so terrible, when later on the women came to visit the sepulchre, has noth-

ing but words of peace and comfort for them. Let me only love like them and I shall have no reason to fear.

Colloquy with Christ risen. Ad regias Agnidades, page 281.

MEDITATION III

CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The Gospels say nothing of this apparition; but common sense tells us that, as none was so dear to Our Lord as His holy Mother, none had been so faithful to Him, He could not fail to hasten first to gladden her with the joy of His resurrection.

Mental Picture.—Mary weeping for joy in the arms of her Son.

Petition.—Great joy with both Son and Mother.

FIRST POINT.—The blessed Virgin knew that her Lord would rise again; her faith never wavered for a moment, and as He left Limbo for the sepulchre a deep peace came down upon her soul. When He raised His body to life she was conscious of it and her heart thrilled with deep and tender joy. She knew well that He would come first of all to visit her; yet she still lay prostrate on the ground waiting for His coming.

SECOND POINT.—All at once her Jesus stands

beside her. She clasps His feet and kisses them; then raising her from the ground He takes her in His arms, while she weeps for very gladness.

What a moment this for that blessed Mother! a foretaste of heavenly joy, making up for all she has gone through. "In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness" (*Ps.* xxix 6). "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul" (*Ps.* xciii. 19).

THIRD POINT.—Then, we may believe, the spirits of the just, as they had gazed upon the dead body of their Redeemer and beheld it restored to life, were now allowed to share in the joy of this happy meeting and to contemplate the beauty of the immaculate Virgin, the Woman of Prophecy, whose seed had crushed the serpent's head and of whom so many of them had sung. Let me take part in their joy and thankfulness, and above all in hers.

Colloquy with Jesus and Mary. Regina Coeli, page 302.

MEDITATION IV

THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—In the early dawn the women make their way to the tomb, but find the stone rolled

away and the tomb empty. An angel tells them that Christ is risen, whereupon they run to carry the news to His disciples.

Mental Picture.—The angel in shining apparel.

Petition.—To seek Jesus alone.

FIRST POINT.—To know in what order the subsequent events followed each other is impossible. The Gospel-story is here all confused and incoherent; but this is just what we should expect. What orderly narrative could half so well describe the joyful excitement of Our Lord's disciples on that wonderful morning? One report comes in after another, one glad surprise succeeds another in such quick succession that there is no time to think what order they follow.

While some of these women—for there may have been two companies—are on their way to the sepulchre, meaning to complete the hurried embalming of Friday night, they bethink them of the huge stone wherewith the tomb is closed, “and they said one to another: who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking they saw the stone rolled back; for it was very great” (*Mark* xvi. 3). How often has this happened to me! Obstacles that seemed insurmountable, as I have gone bravely on, have suddenly disappeared, the grace of God, when the time came, making quite easy what had before seemed so difficult.

SECOND POINT.—“And entering into the sepulchre they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe; and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is risen; He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him.”

Many a time when I was seeking my happiness in creatures have the angels whispered: “Jesus alone can make you happy. He is not here. He is risen. Why seek you the living among the dead?” God grant that henceforth I may set my joy in Him alone.

THIRD POINT.—“But go,” continued the angel, “tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee. There you shall see Him, as He told you. But they, going out, fled from the sepulchre; for a trembling fear had seized them, and they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid” (*Mark* xvi. 7, 8). “And behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail. But they came up and took hold of His feet, and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not. Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee. There they shall see Me” (*Matt.* xxviii). “My brethren” He calls them; for, though so glorious and triumphant, He is still and ever will be one of us.

Colloquy with Jesus risen. Ad regias Agni dapes, page 281.

MEDITATION V

CHRIST AND MAGDALEN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Meantime Our Lord had appeared to Magdalen, who, unable to tear herself away from the sepulchre, had gone back to look again for the body of her Master and, not finding it, had remained there weeping (*John* xx).

Mental Picture.—Magdalen at the feet of Jesus.

Petition.—A deep personal love for Christ.

FIRST POINT.—“But Mary stood at the sepulchre without weeping. Now as she was weeping she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre; and she saw two angels in white sitting one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.”

Magdalen is so full of one thought that she does not seem to notice that these are angels. “They have taken away my Lord.” Until she finds her Lord what can she do but weep? Neither man nor angel can comfort her. Oh, that I had something of this devoted love for my Saviour! How often has He been taken away from me, and yet I have not wept!

SECOND POINT.—“When she had thus said she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him: Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away.” Our Lord had not disguised Himself; but Magdalen was so intent on her search for Him that she did not trouble herself to look at any one. “If thou hast taken *Him* hence,” she says, as though every one like herself, must needs be thinking only of Him. “I will take Him away;” for, as Á. Kempis tells us, “Love knoweth no measure. . . . It can achieve anything, and it doth perform and effect many things where he that loveth not fainteth and falleth prostrate” (iii. 5).

THIRD POINT.—“Jesus saith to her: Mary.” Then at once she recognizes His voice and casts herself down at His feet, crying: “Rabboni.” “Jesus saith to her: Do not touch Me; for I am not yet ascended to My Father.” The other women He suffered to embrace His feet. This may have been because He saw them so terribly afraid, which was not at all the case with Magdalen; and possibly He saw something too human in her love for Him and so wished to impress upon her the sense of His divinity. “But go to My brethren,” He continues, “and say to them: I ascend to My

Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God"; reminding us once more that He is going back to heaven as our elder brother to intercede with God, our common Father, for all His children on earth.

Colloquy with Jesus, our brother. Victimæ Paschali, page 311.

MEDITATION VI

CHRIST AND PETER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Peter and John run to the sepulchre. Our Lord appears to Peter. The soldiers are bribed by the chief priests.

Mental Picture.—Peter at our Saviour's feet.

Petition.—A deep faith in the Resurrection.

FIRST POINT.—When the women reported to the apostles what they had seen "these words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them." Nevertheless Peter and John set off for the sepulchre to see for themselves. "And they both ran together, and that other disciple did out-run Peter and came first to the sepulchre . . . yet he went not in. Then came Simon Peter following him and went into the sepulchre." St. John tells us that "as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead" (*John* xx. 9).

Our Lord, indeed, had distinctly told them so; but their incredulity has the effect of making their evidence much more convincing than if they had believed at once.

In these unhappy days of ours men are casting aside all faith in the supernatural. They deny the virgin birth, the miracles of Christ, His resurrection, His divinity. All these blessed truths seem to them "as idle tales." This ought to be an argument with me for a stronger faith than ever. "Although all should be scandalized in Thee" by Thy grace "I will never be scandalized" (*Matt.* xxvi. 33).

SECOND POINT.—"And Peter went away wondering in himself at that which was come to pass" (*Luke* xxiv. 12). We know that morning our Saviour appeared to Peter and that his evidence had more weight with the others than all the rest: "The Lord is risen indeed," they said, "and hath appeared to Simon" (*Luke* xxiv. 34). His was the official evidence of their Master's resurrection. It was probably now that this apparition took place. The details we know not; but we can well imagine how Peter fell at his beloved Master's feet and wept in silence, and how he was at once forgiven and commanded once more to confirm his brethren.

THIRD POINT.—Meantime "some of the guards came into the city and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they, being as-

sembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while you were asleep" (*Matt.* xxviii. 11-13). "Truly," writes St. Augustine, "they have searched after iniquities and have failed in their search. You bring sleeping witnesses, do you? Alas! you yourselves are asleep who have thus failed in your search" (*Aug. on Ps. lxi. 7*).

Colloquy with our forgiving Lord. *Victimæ Paschali*, page 311.

MEDITATION VII

ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Two of the disciples are joined by Christ on their way to Emmaus. At first they do not recognize Him, but know Him at last in the breaking of bread (*Luke* xxiv. 13).

Mental Picture.—Christ walking with His two disciples.

Petition.—Grace to know Our Lord in holy communion.

FIRST POINT.—"And behold two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem named Emmaus, and they talked together of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass that while they talked, and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself, also drawing near, went with them; but their eyes were held that they should not know Him." Their faith, as we see later on, was very imperfect; yet they were speaking of Jesus and were sad, and so they deserved that He should console them.

He asks them what they are discoursing of so sadly. They are surprised that He does not know, and begin to tell Him what has happened, the hopes they had formed, the reports the women had brought from the tomb. Then He said to them: "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him."

But if Christ ought to suffer surely we ought to suffer with Him if we hope to share in His glory. "The disciple is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me they will also persecute you" (*John* xv. 20). And while He spoke their hearts were burning within them.

SECOND POINT.—"And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going; and He made as though He would go farther." Thus Jesus loves to act, that He may draw us to Himself, hiding

Himself but never deceiving. In every accident of life—though in very truth there are no accidents—Jesus is hidden, and we may always find Him if we choose to seek.

“But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening and the day is now far spent.” A beautiful prayer this, especially for those who are getting on in years; though none of us, not even the youngest, can tell how near his little day is to its ending.

THIRD POINT.—“And He went in with them. And it came to pass whilst He was at table with them He took bread and blessed and brake, and gave to them.” It was His own body that He gave them; and immediately “their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight.” Do I know Him in the breaking of bread, in the most holy Eucharist? If not, what is it that holds my eyes, want of faith or want of charity?

Colloquy with our sacramental God. Anima Christi, page 284.

MEDITATION VIII

CHRIST AND THE TWELVE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Saviour shows Himself to the

twelve, St. Thomas being absent, and institutes the sacrament of Penance (*John* xx).

Mental Picture.—The apostles filled with fear at His sudden appearance.

Petition.—Deep gratitude for this great sacrament of mercy.

FIRST POINT.—“Now when it was late that same day, . . . and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you” (*John* xx. 19). St. Luke tells us that the disciples were “troubled and frightened, supposing that they saw a spirit”; and no wonder; for the door was barred and He entered without opening it, showing for the first time the ethereal condition of His risen body.

On the other hand, they were by this time convinced of His resurrection. They had just been listening to the story of the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus; after hearing it they had recalled what evidently weighed more with them than anything else, that He had been seen by Peter: “The Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (*Luke* xxiv. 34). Nevertheless, when He stood so suddenly in their midst they were afraid; for the spiritual world, even to those that believe in it, is strange and unfamiliar.

Our Lord had come with a special purpose; but, seeing them so scared, He began to reassure them:

“Why are you troubled?” He said. “A spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have.” Then “He showed them His hands and His feet,” with the great wounds in them; and lastly, calling for food, He ate before them and with them.

SECOND POINT.—Then at length they were satisfied, and St. John tells us they “were glad when they saw the Lord.” They must, indeed, have been glad after all they had gone through in the past few days.

Then Christ, seeing that He is now recognized, returns from this interruption to the object which has brought Him here. Having repeated His Easter greeting: “Peace be to you,” He speaks thus: “As My Father hath sent Me, I also send you.” Then breathing on them: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” By this solemn ceremony and its accompanying words He shows that He is going to do something very great and mysterious. What can it be?

He is going to institute the great sacrament of mercy. The last time he saw them all together before His passion He gave them the Holy Eucharist; the first time He meets them after His resurrection He gives them the sacrament of Penance.

THIRD POINT.—“Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained.” In these solemn, sac-

ramental words our divine Saviour constitutes His apostles as judges in His Church and means them to hand on their commission to others.

Now a judge, before passing sentence, is bound to hear the case. Hence comes the obligation to confess sin; for unless we accuse ourselves how is the case to be brought before the court?

If confession had been invented by the clergy in order to get power over the people; in the first place, they would have exempted themselves; but they are not exempted; priests and bishops and the Pope himself go to confession.

In the second place, we should be able to say precisely when the custom was first introduced because there would most certainly have been an outcry against it. We all confess our sins because we believe it to be the will of Christ, our Saviour; no one would do it otherwise. Let us bless Him for making His will so clear to us, and for giving us such abundant opportunities of having our sins forgiven.

Colloquy with Jesus, our merciful judge. Ad regias Agni dapes, page 281.

MEDITATION IX

CHRIST AND THOMAS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Thomas in a fit of folly refuses to be-

lieve. Jesus appears again and reproaches him for his obstinacy (*John* xx).

Mental Picture.—Thomas touching Christ's wounds.

Petition.—A simple faith.

FIRST POINT.—“The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Thomas in all this was clearly very much to blame; even Peter's authority was not enough to convince him. Yet God, after His manner, drew good out of this want of faith; for it made the evidence for the Resurrection complete. “The disbelief of Thomas,” says St. Gregory, “has been more profitable to us than the belief of all the rest.”

A whole week passed by before Christ appeared again. If Thomas had never seen Him he could not have complained; yet he it was who, when Our Lord was returning to Bethany, had said so generously: “Let us also go, that we may die with Him” (*John* xi. 16). Alas, how unreliable we are! sometimes so fervent, sometimes so hard of heart.

SECOND POINT.—“And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He

said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side, and be not faithless but believing." Thomas, now, we may well believe, held back in confusion; but Jesus, taking his hand, put his finger "into the place of the nails" and his hand into the wounded side. "Then Thomas answered and said to Him: My Lord and my God!"

THIRD POINT.—"Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed." These words conveyed a loving reproach to Thomas, but how full of comfort they are to us! We have not seen and yet we believe; therefore are we blessed, far more blessed than if we had seen. Every time we bend the knee before our sacramental God we deserve that blessing anew. Let us thank God that we have not seen. The day will come when faith will give place to sight: "In my flesh I shall see my God" (*Job.* xxix. 26).

Colloquy with Jesus on the altar. Pange Lingua, page 294.

MEDITATION X

THE FIVE WOUNDS OF CHRIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Lord has shown in His risen body that He means to retain His wounds forever.

Mental Picture.—Your crucifix.

Petition.—Love of Christ crucified.

FIRST POINT.—Our Saviour retains His wounds for three reasons: First, as a memorial of His love and a pledge that He will never forget us. “Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands” (*Is.* xlix. 15). So in Catholic countries the crucifix is seen everywhere, not only in churches and in the houses of the faithful, but in market-places and law-courts, on the high-roads and in the mountain-passes, that the memory of Christ’s love for us may be kept forever green and the thought of His sufferings be ever with us. Only the heretic, the infidel, and the devil would destroy it.

I will pray that the Faith of old may thrive and blossom and Christ reign supreme.

SECOND POINT.—Secondly, that He may plead with them to His heavenly Father. To Noe God said: “I will set My bow in the clouds, and it

shall be the sign of a covenant between Me, and between the earth; and when I shall cover the sky with clouds, My bow shall appear in the clouds; and I will remember My covenant with you and with every living soul that beareth flesh, and there shall no more be waters of a flood, to destroy all flesh" (*Gen.* ix. 13). Much more, then, is God moved to mercy when He looks on the wounds of His beloved Son. "Behold, O God, our protector, and look on the face of Thy Christ" (*Ps.* lxxxiii 10). "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the just" (1 *John* ii. 1).

THIRD POINT.—Thirdly, that these blessed wounds may stir our hearts to gratitude, loyalty, and atonement. "And they shall say to Him: What are these wounds in the midst of Thy hands? And He shall say: With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved Me" (*Zach.* xiii. 6). "Behold this Heart," said Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary, "which has loved men so much and is so little loved in return." These sacred wounds at the last day will fill the just with hope and joy; but what terror they will bring to the wicked! "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced" (*Zach.* xii. 10).

Colloquy with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. En ego, page 288.

MEDITATION XI

THE APPARITION BY THE LAKE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus appears to His disciples as they are fishing and fills their net with fish. He then eats with them on the shore of the lake (*John* xxi).

Mental Picture.—Christ serving His disciples.

Petition.—Confidence in His love.

FIRST POINT.—Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, and John and two other disciples were together at the lake side. “Simon Peter saith to them: I go a-fishing. They say to him: We also come with thee.” All through this narrative Peter is the prominent figure; the boat is his, the fish are his, he draws in the net, and all Our Lord’s words are addressed to him. Each smallest incident therefore is mentioned with a purpose. It is as head of the Church that Peter says: “I go a-fishing,” and the others represent the hierarchy of the Church when they answer: “We also go with thee.”

“And that night they caught nothing.” Weary and disheartened enough we may be sure they were. “And when the morning came Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples, because it was not yet light, “knew not that it was Jesus.” Often have I fished all night and caught nothing. When that happens again let me be on the alert to recog-

nize my Saviour; for He is never far away and is always ready to come to my aid. We can not help wondering why the disciples did not recognize their Master's voice; but we may take this as an evidence of His habitual modesty and quiet composure. "He shall not cry, . . . neither shall His voice be heard abroad" (*Is.* xlii. 2). They had never heard Him raise His voice before; so it was unfamiliar to them.

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord, hearing that they have caught nothing, bids them cast the net on the right side of the ship and they shall find. We can imagine them saying to each other: "What does He mean by that? Have we not been casting on both sides all night long?" Nevertheless they took heart and resolved to have one more try. "They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."

One would have thought that Peter would now recognize Our Lord at once, for the very same thing had happened to him three years before; but no doubt he was so lost in astonishment that he could not collect his thoughts. John was the first to know whose voice had spoken—"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God"—and he said to Peter: "It is the Lord." On hearing this Peter awoke with a start from his trance, wondering that he had been so slow to recognize his Master; then, forgetting everything else, he threw

on his coat and leaped into the water to go to Jesus.

It must have taken the others a long time to haul in that heavy net, “ full of great fishes, one hundred fifty-three.” Meanwhile Peter was alone with Jesus; we would give anything to know what passed between them; but we are not told.

THIRD POINT.—“As soon as they came to land they saw hot coals lying and a fish laid thereon and bread,” Our Lord with His own divine hands having got breakfast ready for them. “Jesus saith to them: Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught”; and St. John takes care to tell us that it was Peter who did this.

Then they sat down to eat. No word was said; for their hearts were full; and Jesus went about waiting on them, as He had promised to do: “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Amen, I say to you that He will gird Himself and make them sit down to meat and passing will minister unto them” (*Luke xii. 37*).

Colloquy with our loving Master. Ad regias Agni dapes, page 281.

MEDITATION XII

CHRIST'S COMMISSION TO PETER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Christ appoints Peter the shepherd of His flock and predicts his martyrdom.

Mental Picture.—The disciples sitting on the ground about Our Lord.

Petition.—Love of Jesus.

FIRST POINT.—When the silent meal is over Our Lord speaks, and He speaks to Peter. “Simon, son of John,” He says, “lovest thou Me more than these?” In the supper-chamber Peter boasted that he loved his Master better than the rest, that though all should forsake Him he never would. Our Lord’s question reminds him of this; but Peter has learned now how little he can rely upon himself, so his reply is very humble: “Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.” Then Christ says to him: “Feed My lambs.” The same question is repeated, but without those last words; for Peter’s humble distrust of himself is evident. He answers as before, and again Jesus says: “Feed My lambs.” The question being put the third time, Peter is grieved; for this repeated questioning seems to throw a doubt upon his love, and he is afraid our Saviour sees something wrong in his heart. Could he but know the meaning of it he

would be filled with joy; for Jesus is but giving him an opportunity, by three times declaring his love, to atone for his triple denial. However Peter, being grieved, answers more fervently than ever: "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Then Jesus says: "Feed My sheep."

SECOND POINT.—"Feed My lambs; feed My sheep." What is the meaning of it? Why, the lambs and the sheep are the whole flock, and to Peter they are all committed. The lambs are the faithful, the sheep the bishops and clergy. The sheep take care of the lambs, the shepherd takes care of them all, and the shepherd is Peter. Christ, the Good Shepherd, having laid down His life for His sheep, is about to go back to His Father, and Peter is to rule the flock in His stead.

THIRD POINT.—Yes, Our Lord has laid down His life for His sheep, and now He goes on to foretell that Peter shall do so likewise. "Amen, amen, I say to thee; when thou wast younger thou didst gird thyself and didst walk whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not." This, St. John tells us, Our Lord said, signifying by what death Peter should glorify God; he was to stretch forth his hands, like his Master, on the cross.

Then Jesus rose up and moved away from them,

saying to Peter: "Follow Me." Peter did so; but, seeing John following also, he asked: "Lord, what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me." That is, even though I decree that he live on to the end of the world what affair is it of yours? No human friendship, however holy, must stand betwixt you and Me. Leave him in My hands and look to yourself. The one thing you have to do is to follow Me.

Colloquy with the Good Shepherd. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION XIII

THE APPARITION ON THE MOUNTAIN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The disciples assembled by Our Lord's appointment on a mountain in Galilee and there He showed Himself to them (*Matt.* xxviii).

Mental Picture.—"And, seeing Him, they adored; but some doubted."

Petition.—Faith in Christ's promises.

FIRST POINT.—"And Jesus coming spoke to them, saying: All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth." So it was that David sang: "I am appointed king by Him over Sion, His holy mountain, preaching His commandment. The Lord said

to Me: Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (*Ps.* ii. 6). I will rejoice in the royal power of Christ my king and do all I may to increase it. "Thy Kingdom come."

SECOND POINT.—"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." "Therefore," because I have this worldwide power, go ye and teach and baptize. The eternal happiness of men is My one object; I am king only for their good. Can we doubt this? "For us men and for our salvation" the Son of God came down from heaven and took flesh and died and rose again. "For us men and for our salvation" He is now going back to His Father. He is thinking only of us: "I tell you the truth; it is expedient to you that I go" (*John* xvi. 7).

"Teaching them to observe all those things whatsoever I have commanded you." Thus and thus only can we show our love and loyalty to Christ our King. "If you love Me keep My commandments."

THIRD POINT.—"And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." By His grace He is with us, in the holy Gospels, in His ever-living Church, in the Holy Eucharist.

Our Lord has, indeed, kept His promise, and now we have to keep ours.

Colloquy with Jesus on the altar. Ad regias Agni dapes, page 281.

MEDITATION XIV

THE ASCENSION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Saviour ascends from Mount Olivet, and while the disciples are gazing up into heaven two angels appear and warn them of His second coming (*Acts i.*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus rising up into the sky.

Petition.—That our hearts may follow Him.

FIRST POINT.—Mount Olivet was fitly chosen as the scene of the Ascension; for in the garden at its foot the passion of Christ began. Now as our Saviour stands on its summit all the scenes of His sufferings lie beneath His eyes, the supper-chamber, the Garden of Olives, the halls of Caiphas and of Pilate, the Way of Sorrows, the hill of Calvary. What are His thoughts as He gazes on them for the last time? Is there any regret in His soul? Is He not filled with joy and exultation as He thinks of all He has gone through? “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?” (*Luke xxiv. 26.*) I will

rejoice with my Saviour in His triumph over death and sin. Like Him, I must suffer if I would enter into His glory, and when all is over I, too, shall be glad, knowing "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us" (*Rom.* viii. 18).

SECOND POINT.—Now they gather round to kiss His sacred hands and feet. He embraces His holy Mother and then, raising His hands in benediction, rises by His own power from the earth and soars up into the sky, still blessing them, till at last a cloud receives Him out of their sight.

There they stand gazing up, lost in admiration, till roused from their ecstasy by the question: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up into heaven?" and are aware of two men standing by them in white garments. They are angels in human form.

THIRD POINT.—"Why stand you looking up into heaven?" Surely the angels would not reproach them for looking up into heaven. "Where your treasure is," says our Saviour, "there will your heart be also" (*Luke* xii. 34). No wonder their eyes should follow their hearts. Most men, instead of looking up into heaven, look down upon earth, because it is on earth they have laid up their treasure.

No, their fault is not in looking up but in stand-

ing still to do it. What these angels mean is that there is a great work to do and it is time to set about it; and so they go on to remind the disciples that Christ will come again: "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven." I, too, have a work to do. My hope is in heaven, my work is on earth. Let me look up then and labor, for "the Lord is nigh" (*Phil.* iv. 5).

Colloquy with Christ in heaven. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 293.

MEDITATION XV

THE ELECTION OF MATHIAS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—By the authority of Peter, Mathias is chosen to fill the place of Judas (*Acts* i. 15).

Mental Picture.—Peter standing in the midst of the disciples.

Petition.—Humility and charity.

FIRST POINT.—Mark here the loving providence with which God secures a supply of pastors for His Church and when one fails substitutes another in his place. To each one of us He says: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (*Apoc.* iii. 11), the very thing that befell Judas, of whom it was written: "His bishopric

let another take'' (*Ps.* cviii. 8). This thought should fill us with fear for ourselves.

We can not help noticing at the same time the considerate way in which this is done. Our Lord during the forty days after His Resurrection might have made this appointment Himself; yet He leaves it to Peter in order to strengthen his authority.

SECOND POINT.—Three things are worthy of attention in this election:

1. The submission shown by that holy assembly toward Peter, their leader. They might have urged that it was better to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit; but they believed God had enlightened Peter as to what ought to be done, so they accept his suggestion at once.

2. The utter absence of ambition among the disciples. That strife as to "who shall be the greater," which had broken out so often even among the chosen twelve, is laid aside forever.

3. Their humble prayer to Him who reads the hearts of men and knows what is best for His Church.

THIRD POINT.—By the divine choice Mathias is preferred to Barsabas, notwithstanding that Barsabas was named first and by reason of his holiness was known as "the just." It would seem that God wished, now as ever, to exalt the humble; for Mathias was evidently not so highly

thought of as the other. So for the Gospel of his festival the Church has selected those words of Christ: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones" (*Matt.* xi. 25).

Barsabas shows no annoyance, Mathias no pride, from which I may learn, when passed over, to bow to the divine will, holding myself unworthy of notice, and when I am preferred not to attribute this to my own virtue, but to accept it with fear.

Colloquy with the Holy Ghost. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 308.

MEDITATION XVI

WAITING FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"All these (the apostles) were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (*Acts* i. 14).

Mental Picture.—The supper-chamber.

Petition.—Holy desire.

FIRST POINT.—Three reasons moved God to send us His Spirit:

1. His own goodness. "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son" (*John* iii. 16);

and now, though the world has treated that Son so badly, He will, nevertheless, send down upon it the Holy Spirit.

2. The merit of Christ, who by His passion has earned this great gift for us and at His Father's right hand is pleading for it, as He promised He would: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever" (*John* xiv. 16).

3. Our extreme misery and necessity; for without the help of the Holy Ghost we should never be able to make use of the blood of our Saviour.

He is given then by the Father, He is given by the Son, "who has led captivity captive and has given gifts to men" (*Ephes.* iv. 8). He also gives Himself, being both gift and giver.

SECOND POINT.—What the Holy Ghost comes for we learn from Christ Himself.

1. He is the Paraclete, our comforter, our advocate, who prays for us "with unspeakable groanings" (*Rom.* viii. 26), and inspires us to pray, consoles us in all our troubles, abides with us, though invisible, forever, taking the place of Christ, who can no longer remain with us in visible form.

2. He is our Teacher. "He will teach you . . . and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (*John* xiv. 26).

3. He is the witness to Christ's divinity. "He shall give testimony of Me;" and through the grace He pours into our hearts will enable us to give testimony likewise: "And you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning" (*John* xv. 27).

4. He shall accomplish the work of redemption by applying its fruits to each individual soul: "He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you" (*John* xvi. 14).

5. "He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment" (*John* xvi. 8), convincing or convicting the wicked of sin, "because they believed not in Me; of justice, because I go to the Father," so that it will be left to the Holy Ghost to establish my innocence and holiness of my teaching; "of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judge," and it will be for the Holy Ghost to execute judgment by casting him out of the souls of men, reproving sin, fostering holiness, and leading men to judge aright between Christ and His enemy.

THIRD POINT.—The Fruits of the Holy Ghost are:

Charity—showing itself in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Joy in God's Service.—"I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation" (2 *Cor.* vii. 4).

Peace.—"The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (*Phil.* iv. 7).

Patience.—"The trying of your faith worketh patience, and patience hath a perfect work" (*James* i. 3, 4).

Benignity, or Kindness—thinking well of others and wishing them well. Not like the wicked in the last days, "unmerciful, without kindness" (2 *Tim.* iii. 3).

Goodness.—"Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good" (*Rom.* xii. 21.)

Longanimity, or Perseverance.—"In doing good let us not fail; for in due time we shall reap, not failing" (*Gal.* vi. 9).

Mildness or Sweetness.—"A mild answer breaketh wrath" (*Prov.* xv. 1).

Faith in the nearness of God and His fatherly love for us. He is "not far from every one of us; for in Him we live and move and are" (*Acts* xvii. 27, 28).

Modesty, or religious gravity and self-restraint. "Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh" (*Phil.* iv. 5).

Continency, or control over the instincts of our animal nature. "I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it" (*Wis.* viii. 21).

Chastity, or cleanness in thought, word, and

deed. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (*Matt.* v. 8).

Colloquy with the Holy Spirit. *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, page 308.

MEDITATION XVII

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The Holy Spirit comes down on the disciples in the form of "parted tongues, as it were, of fire" (*Acts* ii. 3).

Mental Picture.—The sacred flame resting on every head in that assembly.

Petition.—"Send forth Thy light and Thy truth" (*Ps.* xlii. 3).

FIRST POINT.—"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting" (*Acts* ii. 2).

This mighty wind shows the divine force with which God's grace is about to sweep over the whole world, overthrowing pagan pride, confounding pagan wisdom, cleansing the foul places of pagan life, and so renewing the face of the earth. "The voice of the Lord is in power; the voice of the Lord in magnificence. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: yea, the voice of the Lord

shall break the cedars of Libanus" (*Ps.* xxviii. 4).

The Church of God, which sprang to life this day, is the grandest miracle of all ages; the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church; one in faith, in worship, in government; holy in her doctrines, in her practice, in her fruits; catholic as to place—for she is everywhere, as to time—for she is always, as to the human race—for all who are saved, even those without her pale, are saved through her; apostolic in her traditions, in her sacramental orders, in her mission to make disciples of every living creature. "Behold now bless ye the Lord; all ye servants of the Lord: who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God" (*Ps.* cxxxiii. 1).

SECOND POINT.—"And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them." These parted tongues signified the spread of the Gospel through every tribe and people; the fire symbolized the flame of charity, to be lit first in the hearts of the disciples and by them to be communicated to their converts, giving them courage to suffer and die for the Name of Jesus. "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?" (*Luke* xii. 49.)

Fire gives light, warmth, and joy; it is, therefore, a fitting emblem of the Holy Spirit, who fills the heart with the light of heavenly wisdom, the

warmth of love and devotion, the joy of faith and hope in God's fatherly goodness. All this we witness in the apostles, who were so blind and foolish before, so enlightened afterward, so cold and cowardly before, such heroes afterward, so sad before when they heard the least mention of the cross, so joyful afterward when they had to bear it.

THIRD POINT.—“And they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak” (*Acts* ii. 4).

This wonderful manifestation of God's power had for its object the conversion of the heathen world. “Tongues are for a sign, not to believers but to unbelievers” (1 *Cor.* xiv. 22). The Holy Ghost comes down on us in Confirmation just as fully as on those first disciples, bringing light and warmth and joy into our souls; but it is enough for us to praise Him in our own mother-tongue. Let us rejoice to do so. “Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing ye to the Lord and bless His name: show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the gentiles: His wonders among all people” (*Ps.* xcv. 1-3).

Colloquy with the Holy Spirit. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 308.

MEDITATION XVIII

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Union with each other, fervor in God's service and supreme contempt for the goods of this world were the characteristics of the first believers.

Mental Picture.—God looking down upon me.

Petition.—So to pass through the good things of time as not to lose those that are eternal" (Collect, Third Sunday after Pentecost).

FIRST POINT.—The union of the first Christians. "All they that believed were together and had all things common" (*Acts* ii. 44). "The multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul" (*Acts* iv. 32).

This is what Christ had petitioned His heavenly Father for on the night before He suffered: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (*John* xvii. 21). Do we still find that fraternal charity among ourselves? In matters of faith we have, like them, one heart and one soul; but unity of faith ought to beget unity of spirit. If we have not that, whose fault is it?

I will pray that this brotherly love may bind

us all together, high and low, rich and poor, master and man, and will do all in my power to foster it; for it is chiefly by this Christian union that we bear our witness to Christ. "And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of all these is charity" (1 *Cor.* xiii. 13). "Dearly beloved, let us love one another; for charity is of God. And every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is charity" (1 *John* iv. 7-8).

SECOND POINT.—Their fervor.

"And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread and in prayers. . . . Continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (*Acts* ii. 42-46).

In this temple their fathers had worshiped for many a hundred years; but now the coming of the Messiah has lent a new meaning to their ancestral religion, explaining all its solemn beauty before finally sweeping it away to make room for a better. How fervently do they pray morning and evening at the hour of incense! Yet the sacrifices of the Law have already been supplanted by the great sacrifice of the Mass, whereof they were but types and figures, and the hearts of these first believers are full of love for Him who has been for so long the object of their desires; so "they

were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread," that is, in listening to the inspired teaching of the twelve and in receiving Holy Communion at their hands.

THIRD POINT.—Their contempt for this world. "Their possessions and goods they sold and divided them to all, according as every one had need" (*Acts* ii. 45). "If thou wilt be perfect," said Jesus, "go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (*Matt.* xix. 21). Do I show anything of this eagerness for Christian perfection, this readiness to strip myself and give to others for the sake of Christ? If I give nothing I shall receive nothing; but in the same measure that I give to the poor I make God my debtor. "Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom" (*Luke* vi. 38).

Colloquy with the Holy Spirit. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 308.

MEDITATION XIX

THE WORKINGS OF THE HOLY GHOST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"That which is born of the flesh is

flesh; that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (*John* iii. 6).

Mental Picture.—God looking down upon me.

Petition.—The grace to yield in all things to the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

FIRST POINT.—Our bodies, being produced by natural generation, grow gradually to human stature and strength, and much in the same way our souls, which are begotten of the Holy Spirit, attain perfection slowly. The body, however, after a while can grow without any further help from her who gave it birth, whereas the growth of the soul depends entirely on its union with the Holy Spirit from whom it drew its life.

"The spirit," says Christ our Lord, "breaketh where He will" (*John* iii. 8); upon those who do not seek Him, upon those who are unworthy of Him, even upon those who resist Him; yet, of course, He pours forth His graces most copiously on such as long for them. And they, becoming like to Him, show mercy in their turn to all around them, good and bad alike, being gentle to the boorish, kind to the unkind, serviceable to the thankless. If I act not thus can I account myself a son of God? "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (*Rom.* viii. 14).

SECOND POINT.—"And thou hearest His voice."

Nothing can prevent His voice from reaching us, for He is the lord of the soul; but, though we

can not shut it out, we have the power to turn away from it, to resist it. If, however, we yield to it, it will teach us many a precious lesson of heavenly wisdom, humbling our pride, strengthening our weakness, illuminating our darkness, and that with a sort of majestic power, "in manner gentle, mighty in effect," so that things most painful and difficult shall become easy and sweet. Do I resist the holy inspirations I receive or listen for them and joyfully respond?

THIRD POINT.—"But thou knowest not whence He cometh nor whither He goeth." For He comes at all seasons and in all places, not only when we are praying, but when we are at work or enjoying ourselves, when we are alone or in company, when we are acting virtuously or exposing ourselves to sin. As a little puff of wind strikes on our cheek and is gone, we know not whither, so the Holy Spirit comes and goes, warning us against evil, rousing us to good, refreshing us in labor, cheering us in sadness. Oh, let Him not come in vain! "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (*Acts* ix. 6.) "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (1 *Kings* iii. 10').

Colloquy with the Holy Ghost. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 308.

MEDITATION XX

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—These are seven in number: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Godliness, and the Fear of the Lord. They are inseparable from Charity and are therefore lost when we fall into mortal sin.

Mental Picture.—God looking down upon me.

Petition.—"Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. l. 13).

FIRST POINT.—What these gifts are meant for.

Wisdom is opposed to that wild folly which leads men to think little of the joys of heaven and to fix their hearts on earthly delights, like the children of Israel, who, loathing the manna sent them by God, sighed for the flesh-pots of Egypt.

Understanding clears away the clouds that obscure our faith, making it easy and sweet to believe the mysteries of God's revelation.

Counsel saves us from rashly exposing ourselves to temptation and gives self-possession when it comes unexpectedly, suggesting the best way to meet the emergency.

Fortitude imparts courage to overcome human respect and to bear persecution.

Knowledge enables us to detect the wiles of the devil, the world, and the flesh; so as not to be lured away from the path of virtue.

Godliness or *Piety* makes the practice of religion attractive and pleasant: "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (*Ps.* xxxiii. 9).

The Fear of the Lord is the great antidote to pride and presumption.

SECOND POINT.—These mighty gifts the Holy Ghost is most ready to give to those who desire them; so we should rouse ourselves to wish and pray, feeling the greatest confidence of obtaining them. Holy Mass and communion, meditation, and good reading are the best means for preparing our souls for their reception, together with frequent invocation of the Holy Spirit. "The Lord will hear me when I shall cry unto Him" (*Ps.* iv. 4).

THIRD POINT.—It is also our duty and it ought to be our delight to thank Him for His gifts when He bestows them. So, when we have been brought safely through a temptation, or have patiently borne harsh words or unjust dealing, or have from our hearts forgiven an injury, or have felt deep faith or great joy and confidence in God's love; let us attribute all this to the Holy Ghost, yielding Him all the glory of it. "Be nothing solicitous; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication,

with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God" (*Philipp.* iv. 6).

Colloquy with the Holy Ghost. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 308.

MEDITATION XXI

ST. STEPHEN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Stephen, the deacon, being "full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people," and they that disputed with him were put to shame; so he is brought before the Council, bears witness to Christ and is stoned to death. (See *Acts* vi and vii.)

Mental Picture.—Stephen standing in the midst of his enemies, who, "looking on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel."

Petition.—Courage to profess the holy Faith.

FIRST POINT.—Stephen, like his divine Master, was charged with speaking "words against the holy place and the Law," and his life, like that of Jesus, was sworn away by false witnesses suborned by the Jews. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake."

If ever I am falsely accused I will try to thank God for it, bearing it with patience and even with

joy. "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed. . . . But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or a railer or a coveter of other men's things; but, if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name" (1 *Pet.* iv. 14-16.)

SECOND POINT.—Being called upon for his defense, Stephen reminds the Council of God's mercies to their fathers and the ingratitude wherewith they had repaid them. Finally he charges them with doing as their fathers did and surpassing them in wickedness: "They have slain them who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have been now the betrayers and the murderers; who have received the Law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it."

"Now, hearing these things, they were cut to the heart and they gnashed with their teeth at him."

"Behold," cried Stephen, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. And they, crying with a loud voice, stopped their ears . . . and, casting him forth without the city, they stoned him."

St. Stephen was the first to shed his blood for Christ.

Whenever I have anything to suffer for the Faith I will look up to Jesus standing at God's right hand with both power and will to help me,

and I will let no fear deter me from bearing witness to Him and His holy Church.

THIRD POINT.—Stephen's death bears a very striking resemblance to that of his Saviour. Christ prayed for His persecutors: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." His faithful disciple prayed: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Christ gave His soul into the hands of His Father: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Stephen gave his into the hands of Christ: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Both Stephen's prayers, like those of Christ, were answered; his prayer for his enemies in the conversion of Saul, his prayer for himself, for, faithful to the end, "he fell asleep in the Lord."

Colloquy with St. Stephen. The Creed.

MEDITATION XXII

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

Part I

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Saul on his way to Damascus is struck to the ground and hears a voice saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (*Acts ix. 4.*)

Mental Picture.—Saul prostrate on the earth; they that are with him filled with amazement.

P'etition.—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

FIRST POINT.—Saul had kept the garments of those who stoned Stephen, and now, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogue; that if he found any man or woman of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (*Acts* ix. 1-2).

Thus he writes of himself: "I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (*Gal.* i. 14).

To the end of his life the thought that he had persecuted the Church of God was a constant source of humiliation to St. Paul; but it was also a great stimulus to his zeal, and he felt that he could never do enough to atone for it.

Should not my past sins have the same effect on me? Every sin is a persecution of Christ. God has forgiven me indeed; but how can I ever forgive myself? I ought, like this great apostle, to lose no opportunity of making satisfaction for the past by patience under suffering and by fervor in every good work.

SECOND POINT.—As Saul drew nigh to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him, and, falling on the ground, he heard a voice

saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? Who said: Who art Thou, Lord? And He: I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest" (*Acts* ix. 3-5).

Mark here how our divine Master identifies Himself with His followers. Whatsoever we do to the least of His little ones we do it unto Him. What an incentive this to do good to all our fellow men, to the poor and afflicted, to the friendly and the unfriendly, to those that are near and those that are far off, by kind thoughts, kind words, kind deeds, by almsgiving and by prayer; for prayer can reach to the furthest ends of the earth.

Let Christ's interests, then, be our interests; let us pray for all men, for He loves them all, and whenever we get the chance let us give them our practical help, seeing Jesus Christ in each one of them.

THIRD POINT.—"It is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (*Acts* ix. 5). A stubborn ox that kicks when goaded only brings fresh punishment on itself; and the soul that resists the grace of God hurts itself alone. "They that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul" (*Job*. xii. 10).

And Saul "trembling and astonished," said: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He has no doubt—how could he have?—that it is God who is speaking to him; so he acknowledges Jesus as

God, that Jesus whom he had so bitterly persecuted, that Jesus whom Stephen had seen standing at God's right hand. His submission is complete. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" I am ready now to obey Thee in all things.

"And the Lord said to him: Arise and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do" (*Acts ix. 7*). Having by His grace changed Saul from a wolf into a lamb, Our Lord hands him over to His Church for further instruction. So to the Church of Christ we all look for guidance. She alone can tell us what we must do to carry out God's will.

Colloquy with St. Paul. De Profundis, page 290.

MEDITATION XXIII

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

Part II

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Saul enters Damascus and after three days is baptized by Ananias.

Mental Picture.—Saul praying in his blindness.

Petition.—"Lord, that I may see" (*Luke xviii. 41*).

FIRST POINT.—"And Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw

nothing. But they, leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days without sight and he did neither eat nor drink" (*Acts* ix. 8-9).

This was the turning-point in Saul's life; for the moment, he was utterly crushed and subdued. Something like this may happen to any man when for the first time he makes a retreat. He hears the voice of Christ; all his pride and self-sufficiency forsake him; he sits dazed and humbled, waiting to know God's will.

Then the Lord bade Ananias seek out Saul; but he was afraid, for Saul's reputation as a persecutor had gone before him. "And the Lord said to him: go thy way; for this man is to Me a vessel of election, to carry My name before the gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (*Acts* ix. 15-16). Oh, that I, too, may be chosen to do and suffer something for the glory of my God!

SECOND POINT.—Then Ananias went his way, and no sooner had he laid his hands on Saul than "there fell from his eyes as it were scales; and he received his sight. And rising up he was baptized" (*Acts* ix. 18).

I also am blind, not as Saul was from converse with God, but from the false glare of this world and the fascination of sensuality. "The bewitch-

ing of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind" (*Wis.* iv. 12). Let me, then, pray earnestly for light to see all earthly things as they really are and to lay up my treasure not here but in heaven.

"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth before the time of affliction come . . . before the silver cord be broken, and the golden fillet shrink back, and the pitcher be crushed at the fountain, and the wheel be broken upon the cistern, and the dust return into its earth from whence it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes, and all things are vanity" (*Eccles.* xii. 1). "All is vanity but to love God and serve Him alone" (Á KEMPIS i. 1).

THIRD POINT.—"And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. And all that heard him were astonished and said: Is not this he who persecuted in Jerusalem those that called upon this name?" (*Acts* ix. 20–21.) They had good reason to be amazed; for they did not know what Saul knew, nor how suddenly and how marvelously God's grace can change the heart of a man when he no longer resists its action.

Let me yield up my heart to be moulded and fashioned by God's grace as the clay in the hands of the potter. "Create a clean heart in me, O

God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels” (*Ps.* 1. 12).

Colloquy with St. Paul. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 308.

MEDITATION XXIV

THE SPIRIT OF ST. PAUL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—This great Apostle of the Gentiles is from every point of view a miracle of God’s grace; yet grace builds on nature, and St. Paul’s nature offered a splendid foundation. His most striking characteristics are zeal for God’s glory, joy in suffering, and sympathy for his fellow men.

Mental Picture.—St. Paul bidding a last farewell to the Christians at Ephesus. “And there was much weeping among them all. And, falling on the neck of Paul, they kissed him” (*Acts* xx. 37).

Petition.—Some little of St. Paul’s spirit.

FIRST POINT.—Zeal for God’s glory was his master-passion, showing itself in restless energy, in long and painful journeyings over many thousands of miles, from city to city, by land and sea, in the burning words he wrote to those he had begotten in Jesus Christ, in the persecutions of every kind he endured in the Cause of the Gospel. “Of

the Jews," he tells us, "five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labor and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 *Cor.* xi. 24).

If I have any zeal for God's glory it will show itself, as in this grand soul, by my readiness to labor and suffer for His sake.

SECOND POINT.—Yet amid all these toils and sufferings St. Paul is not patient only but exultant. "I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation" (2 *Cor.* vii. 4). "Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (2 *Cor.* xii. 9). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations" (2 *Cor.* i. 3-4).

This superabundant joy had its source in his confidence in God and his loyal devotion to his Lord and Master. "But we had in ourselves the

answer of death, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead, who hath delivered us and doth deliver us out of so great dangers, in whom we trust that He will yet also deliver us" (2 *Cor.* i. 9-10).

"What do you mean, weeping and afflicting my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus" (*Acts* xxi. 13).

May God grant me something of this loving confidence, that I, too, may bear my sufferings with joy. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice" (*Philipp.* iv. 4).

THIRD POINT.—We can judge of St. Paul's gift of sympathy from the love he inspired. The Ephesians wept at parting from him, "being grieved most of all for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more" (*Acts* xx. 38). And no wonder, for he was so utterly unselfish. "I also in all things please all men, not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but to many; that they may be saved" (1 *Cor.* x. 33).

"For, whereas I was free as to all, I made myself the servant of all, that I might gain the more. I became to the Jews a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law as if I were under the law . . . to them that were without the law as if I were without the law . . .

to the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men, that I might save all" (1 *Cor.* ix. 19).

"Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized and I am not on fire?" (2 *Cor.* xi. 29.)

"I write not these things to confound you, but I admonish you as my dearest children; for if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus by the Gospel I have begotten you" (1 *Cor.* iv. 14-15).

Sympathy with others is a gift we ought all to desire and cultivate; it is a choice fruit of charity. "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep" (*Rom.* xii. 15). So said this blessed Apostle and so he did. Well will it be for me if I strive to imitate him, making myself all things to all men, that I may gain all.

Colloquy with St. Paul. Veni, Sancte Spiritus,
page 308.

MEDITATION XXV

OUR LADY'S SOJOURN ON EARTH

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—After remaining for a time at Jerusalem the holy Virgin accompanied St. John to Ephesus and there spent the rest of her life.

Mental Picture.—Your favourite ‘Madonna.’

Petition.—Grace in sorrow and in joy to live for God’s glory alone.

FIRST POINT.—Our Lady’s life after parting with her divine Son was one of mingled joy and sorrow, sorrow because of her exile; for she longed “to be dissolved and to be with Christ” (*Philipp.* i. 23).

“Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged! I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar; my soul hath been long a sojourner” (*Ps.* cxix. 5-6). Would that I felt such a yearning desire for heaven!

Sorrow, too, for the sufferings of her Jesus, which were never out of her thoughts. So long as she dwelt in Jerusalem, says tradition, she daily visited the places sanctified by His blood and so consecrated the practice we all love so much of following the Way of the Cross. Let me learn from her to remember the Passion of my Saviour. Strange I can ever forget it.

SECOND POINT.—Yet the sorrows of the holy Virgin were mingled with rapturous joy; for all around her she saw the love of her Son spreading like a forest-fire from heart to heart. She saw His disciples in the fervor of their loyalty giving up fortune and life for His dear name. The heroic constancy of Stephen filled her with consolation, and before He left this earth how many

another courageous soul had faced torture and death for the sake of her beloved!

Would I have this blessed Mother rejoice over me? Then let me cheerfully embrace the cross for love of Jesus, be patient in suffering, generous in self-sacrifice, resolute in overcoming the solicitations of the world and the flesh.

THIRD POINT.—Her life was at the same time an eminently useful one, crowded with deeds of love and mercy. The very sight of her stirred the heart of the believer to its depths, the sound of her voice was music in his ears. Who could speak of Jesus so eloquently as she? The sweet mysteries of His birth, His childhood, His daily toil at Nazareth, His last words on the cross—who could explain them so well? What a gospel was the gospel of Mary! We have it summarized in part in the opening chapters of St. Luke; but how much more she had to tell, and how sweetly she told it!

Let me open my heart to her teaching and catch from her pure soul something of her devoted love for Him who called her Mother and has given her as a mother to each one of us.

*Colloquy with the Mother of God. The Memo-
rare, page 290.*

MEDITATION XXVI

THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S DEATH

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Some fourteen years after the Passion of her Son her exile came to an end, and, with all the apostles around her, she gave up her pure soul to God.

Mental Picture.—That holy body laid out for burial.

Petition.—Such a life as may have no need to fear death.

FIRST POINT.—Why should Mary die? Because she was a daughter of Adam, whose sin had brought death upon the whole human race. True, she had no share in the sin, neither had she inherited its curse, being by God's grace preserved in her very conception from every spot and stain; but her divine Son had made Himself like to us in all things, sin alone excepted; He had passed through the gate of death, and it was fitting that His Mother should follow Him; for she, too, was like us in all save sin.

I came into the world with Adam's sin upon me, and the concupiscence which is a result thereof has caused me to commit many other sins of my own. I, therefore, deserve to die; death is part

of my sentence. Let me accept it with humble submission and prepare for it by an atoning sorrow.

SECOND POINT.—“Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt Thou give Thy holy one to see corruption” (*Ps.* xv. 10). These words of the prophet refer to Christ; yet it was fitting that they should find their fulfilment also in His blessed Mother. How should that innocent flesh which gave birth to God made man become the food of worms? That a sinner such as I am should return to the dust from which he was made is only just and equitable; but this pure and beautiful creature! No, I can not bear the thought of it. Neither could God, and so He has exempted this sacred body from the law of decay; this is what common sense and ancient tradition teach us. The bones of other saints have been treasured up from the earliest ages; but no one has ever claimed to possess any part of her body whom the Church calls the “Ark of the Covenant” and of whom David sings: “Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting place, Thou and the Ark, which Thou hast sanctified” (*Ps.* cxxxi. 8).

For me, sinner as I am, along with death will come corruption. “I have said to rottenness: Thou art my father; to worms: My mother and my sister” (*Job* xvii. 14). But Mary was without sin.

THIRD POINT.—How did she die? Full of

ecstatic love and desire. Not sickness, but the soul's longing for God's presence brought her blessed life to a close. Her flesh could no longer bear the strain of that yearning "desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (*Philipp.* i. 23). "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (*Ps.* xli. 2-3.)

Do I find anything like this in myself? "Blessed are ye that hunger now; for you shall be filled" (*Luke* vi. 21).

Colloquy with the Blessed Virgin. Hail Mary.

MEDITATION XXVII

THE ASSUMPTION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The soul of the holy Virgin the moment it left her body passed into the presence of God, and three days later her body was united with it once more and was taken up into heaven.

Mental Picture.—Jesus bringing His Mother into His kingdom accompanied by myriads of bright spirits.

Petition.—Joy in our Lady's triumph.

FIRST POINT.—We hear the divine Lover speaking to His beloved: “Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. . . . Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee” (*Cant.* ii. 10; iv. 7).

“Who is this?” chant the angel chorus. “Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved? . . . Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?” (*Cant.* viii. 5; vi. 9.)

And Christ answers: “One is my dove; my perfect one is but one” (*Cant.* vi. 8).

Let me join God’s angels in their hymns of praise; for is not this “Our tainted nature’s solitary boast”?

SECOND POINT.—Now all the saints troop forth to meet their queen—Adam and Eve, the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Martyrs of the Old Law, Stephen, and many another who had shed his blood for Christ.

Adam and Eve had received and handed on to their children the blessed promise made to them in Eden, and this is the woman who has crushed the serpent’s head. David had described her as the queen standing on the King’s “right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety” (*Ps.* xlv. 10). Of her had Isaias prophesied: “A vir-

gin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel'' (Is. vii. 14). St. John Baptist, too, and Simeon and St. Joseph were there, and a countless multitude of blessed souls, all greeting with hymns of joy the Virgin Mother through whom God had wrought them such happiness.

My salvation is not yet secure; but if ever I join that blessed throng in the heavenly Jerusalem I shall owe my happiness to Mary; therefore, I will praise her with heart and voice.

THIRD POINT.—The holy Virgin is crowned by her Son as queen of His eternal Kingdom, and saints and angels all unite in acclaiming her as worthy to be their sovereign lady. So there she reigns forever, the daughter of God the Father, the mother of God the Son, the bride of God the Holy Ghost—an eternal evidence of God's love for men. We cannot think of heaven without the Incarnation, nor of the Incarnation without Mary. Yet this great queen is my mother, nor in her glory and exultation does she forget her poor children who on earth are still fighting against the powers of evil. Therefore, as the mariner looks up to the pole-star, so will I look to her, my life, my sweetness, and my hope.

Colloquy with my Queen and Mother. Salve Regina, page 300.

MEDITATION XXVIII

DEVOTION TO OUR LADY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The Blessed Virgin is the Immaculate Mother of God, the compassionate Mother of men.

Mental Picture.—Your favourite “Madonna.”

Petition.—A deep love for Mary and confidence in her love.

FIRST POINT.—She is unspeakably dear to the Holy Trinity. In her stainless purity, her humility, her joyful submission to the will of the Most High, and in every other virtue she surpasses all angels and saints together. She began where they ended. “Her foundations are in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God” (*Ps.* lxxxvi. 1).

If, then, I would love what God loves, I must feel an intense affection for this chosen creature for whom God has done such great things.

She is also supremely dear to Christ our Saviour. She gave Him that human body which for our sakes was scourged and crucified, that body whereon we are fed in the Holy Eucharist. The fountain of His all-redeeming blood had its source in her heart. She loved Him as no other loved

Him, sharing all His joys and all His sorrows as no other could. Now, then, can I pretend to love Jesus unless I love Mary also?

SECOND POINT.—She is the Mother of all and each of us. I can not doubt that Christ's third word from the cross was addressed to me. She has the heart of a mother, too, full of tender pity. She has proved her love for me in a thousand ways. I can confirm from my own experience what St. Bernard so fearlessly asserted eight hundred years ago, that no one ever appealed to her in vain. After God it is to her I owe my redemption and every grace and blessing I have ever received; for she has given me Jesus Christ, the efficient cause of all grace and all blessings. She is "the love-knot between earth and heaven"—
MARTINDALE, *Life of St. Stanislaus*.

THIRD POINT.—She is and always has been dear beyond compare to the Church of God, being invoked throughout Christendom by the most tender names—the Blessed Virgin; Our Lady; Mother of Mercy; our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope; the Star of the Sea; the Gate of Heaven; the Refuge of Sinners; the Help of Christians.

So closely is she coupled with her divine Son that to pray to her is felt to be one and the same thing as praying to Him. Thus at Benediction we sing her Litany while the Blessed Sacrament is exposed; the Angelus, wherein we thrice a day recall

the blessings of the Incarnation, is chiefly a prayer to her; and the same is true of the Rosary.

If I love God's Church, then, if I have the true Catholic instinct, love and devotion to God's Mother must manifest itself in me. In fact, I may test my loyalty to God, to Christ, and to His Church by my feeling toward the ever-blessed Virgin Mary.

Colloquy with God's Mother and mine. Alma Redemptoris, page 283.

PART VI

OF THE PERFECTIONS AND BENE- FITS OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

THE following meditations will deal with the Divinity, the holy Trinity, and the outpouring of God's love on man, suggesting thoughts which should beget in us the purest and highest love.

I. *The Love of Benevolence, or the love of God for His own sake.*

“Our longing for God,” writes St. Basil, “ought to be vehement, insatiable, firm, and constant.” Such is God's love for us; and we know that He would have us love Him in return with our whole heart, our whole mind, our whole soul, our whole strength. This perfect love is beyond our nature and can come to us only from the Holy Ghost. While, then, we dispose ourselves to receive this great gift by meditating on the beauty of God we must humbly and earnestly ask it of Him who alone can bestow it.

II. *The Love of Gratitude.*

There are five motives urging us to this love.

1. The infinite greatness of God, our benefactor.
 2. The infinite love wherewith He confers His favors.
 3. The vast number and the immensity of His gifts.
 4. The vileness of man on whom they are bestowed.
 5. The fact that they are free gifts, never deserved, often quite the contrary.
- The only return in our power is thankfulness, which should manifest itself in three ways:
1. The acknowledgment of the mercy received.
 2. Praise of Him to whom we owe it.
 3. Service freely given in return.

MEDITATION I

THERE IS A GOD

Preparatory Prayer, as above.

Mental Picture.—The sky at night glittering with bright stars.

Petition.—A deep, living, and practical faith in the great God.

FIRST POINT.—We Catholics have no doubt of

God's existence; yet it is well to recall the proofs of it, for we are surrounded nowadays on every side by doubt and infidelity, and we must strengthen the foundations of our own faith if we would support the weakness of others. Moreover, this argument must needs awaken in our hearts both admiration and love.

Our first proof is the argument from *Causality*. Everything that has a beginning is the effect of a cause prior to itself. Every cause except the First Cause must be the effect of another cause. The First Cause is self-existent and therefore, eternal; it exists because it must exist, and without it nothing else could exist.

Now, we find three things in this world of ours; viz., matter, life, and mind. Had they a beginning? Matter (gases, liquids, or solids) certainly had; for (1) if it were eternal and self-existent it would not change; but matter is constantly changing.

(2) It would possess within itself all perfection, physical, intellectual, and moral, and that not in the germ only but actively and in an abiding fulness. Nothing of this do we find in matter. Therefore, it had a beginning, and the cause which produced it existed before it. Therefore God exists.

Life, again, is all around us, in earth and sea and air. Yet we know that this world was once

a molten mass, burning at an intense heat, wherein no life could exist. Therefore, life had a beginning, and the cause that produced it must have possessed life; since no one can give what he has not got. Therefore, God is a living God.

Mind. Till man appeared on earth there was no creature on its surface endowed with intelligence. Therefore, this began with man; and the cause that produced man's intelligence must have been an intelligent cause.

There exists, then, a living and intelligent God—the source of all being, all life, and all mind, the maker of all things visible and invisible.

Therefore, I will worship this great God with all my being. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things.

SECOND POINT.—Our next proof is the argument from *Design*. It is impossible that such a world as this should have come into being by chance. There is such inscrutable complexity everywhere combined with such absolute order; such wonderful adaptations of means to ends; such huge and countless bodies in space at distances to us unthinkable, yet all moving along their orbits with the precision of a perfect piece of mechanism; and withal such exquisite finish in the tiniest things. A microscope may magnify them six hundred times or more; but it reveals no defect of workmanship. Our finest needle will look like

a crowbar; but not the least roughness is apparent in the sting of an insect. The organs of the smallest flower or winged thing are as perfect in their way as our own. The instincts of the animal world astound us, the stories that Nature tells being more surprising than any fairy-tales.

Why does the earth move around the sun at an angle of 23' 30" to the plane of its orbit? Science can furnish no answer; but God's prophet does: "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God Himself that framed the earth and made it, the very maker thereof, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited" (*Is.* xlv. 18). Having created man for a happiness not to be attained on this earth, God knew well that he would needs be restless and always longing for change; so by this simple device He secured for him welcome varieties of climate and season to relieve the monotony of his exile. "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise Him and exalt Him above all forever" (*Dan.* iii. 57).

Is it not clear that reason itself demands belief in God and that disbelief requires an effort? The infidel must strive against his very nature. Therefore, Holy Writ calls him a fool: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God" (*Ps.* xiii. 1).

THIRD POINT.—Our third proof is that God has spoken to Man, has revealed Himself and made His will known to him, and that not once, but

many times over; and these revelations have been attested by marvelous and convincing evidences of divine power. He brought His chosen people out of Egypt "in great signs and wonders," gave them a law on Mount Sinai amid thunder and lightning, filled the Temple of Solomon with the brightness of His presence, and, when Elias called upon Him to declare His majesty and put to naught the false priests of Baal, answered by fire from heaven. But above all has He made Himself known through His divine Son; who, coming on earth to lead men back to His Father, proved the truth of His Gospel by countless miracles, the greatest of all being His own resurrection from the dead.

A clear demonstration of God's existence may be out of our reach; but certainly the cumulative evidence is overwhelming.

There is yet another proof more convincing than all, and that is the personal experience a faithful soul is conscious of that God is near to it, that He is working in it and sanctifying it by His grace. This argument, of course, is purely subjective, and only those can feel its force who already believe. It can not be used to convince another; but for ourselves it is convincing and final. "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (*John* xix. 25); I hear His voice; I feel His presence. You may

talk till doomsday, but you will never persuade me that my God is not with me.

Let the fool, then, say what he please, I will believe in God with all my heart and soul and make His holy will my will.

Colloquy with God, Alpha and Omega. The Creed.

MEDITATION II

GOD IS ETERNAL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture and Petition as in Meditation I.

FIRST POINT.—When Moses was sent to bring the Israelites out of Egypt he spoke thus to God: “Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them: The God of your fathers hath sent me to you. If they should say to me: What is His name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses: I AM WHO AM. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS, hath sent me to you” (*Exod.* iii. 13-14).

This grand and mysterious name signifies that God is the source of all being; the First Cause; self-existent and, therefore, eternal; who ever was and ever will be. And so in Daniel’s vision He is called the “Ancient of days,” because whatsoever

had a beginning is new, whereas God is forever and ever. And, being eternal and infinitely perfect, He suffers no change. “I am the Lord, and I change not” (*Malach. iii. 6*). With Him “there is no change nor shadow of alteration” (*James i. 17*).

SECOND POINT.—And God alone is eternal. “The King of kings and the Lord of lords: who only hath immortality and inhabiteth lights inaccessible” (*1 Tim. vi. 15*). All else is mutable, perishable, dependent at every moment on Him and, but for His supporting hand, falling back into the nothingness from which it came. “In the beginning, O Lord, Thou foundedst the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art always the selfsame; and Thy years shall not fail” (*Ps. ci. 26*).

“If Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled. Thou shalt take away their breath, and they shall fail, and shall return to their dust” (*Ps. ciii. 29*).

THIRD POINT.—How strange, then, is the blindness and perversity of man, that he should turn away from this great and glorious God who made him, to set his heart on perishable creatures like himself!

“Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this; and, ye gates thereof, be very desolate, saith the Lord; for My people have done two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (*Jer.* ii. 12).

For my part I will say with St. Stanislaus: “I was not made for time, but for eternity.” I was not made to set my heart on God’s creatures, but on God, who alone will never fail me.

Colloquy with God eternal. Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

MEDITATION III

GOD INFINITE AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture and Petition as in Meditation I.

FIRST POINT.—There are two ways of thinking of God, as possessing all perfections in an infinite degree or as being free from all the imperfections and limitations of His creatures; and this second method seems best suited to our feeble intelligence. Even the highest angel can not go much further; for God’s essence is beyond any created power of conception. Therefore, it is that, dwelling, as He does, “in light inaccessible,” He is said to be darkness; for a blinding light produces dark-

ness. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him" (*Ps.* xevi. 2). "Moses went to the dark cloud wherein God was" (*Ex.* xx. 21).

SECOND POINT.—God is not just, wise, good, or powerful as men are; for in them these are but qualities which may be more or less; but in God there is no more or less. God is not just, but justice; not wise, but wisdom; not good, but goodness; not powerful, but power; justice, wisdom, goodness and power being of His very essence, infinite as Himself, identical with His Godhead. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and of His greatness there is no end" (*Ps.* cxliv. 3). "Blessed art Thou in the firmament of heaven, and worthy of praise and glorious forever" (*Dan.* iii. 56).

THIRD POINT.—Still, notwithstanding all this, men show so little reverence for God, nay, they leave Him altogether out of their reckoning, living as if they were independent of Him, owed Him nothing, had nothing to expect from Him. Yet all the time they live in Him and, when they sin—appalling thought!—they sin in Him; for, though God dwells no longer in the sinner, the sinner is always in Him.

God forbid that it should be so with me! I will consecrate to Him my memory, my intellect, my will, and with my whole being worship Him.

"What shall we be able to do to glorify Him; for

the Almighty Himself is above all His works? . . . Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can; for He will yet far exceed and His magnificence is wonderful . . . for He is above all praise'' (*Eccclus.* xliii. 30-33).

Colloquy with God infinite and incomprehensible. *Te Deum*, page 307.

MEDITATION IV

GOD THREE IN ONE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture and *Petition* as in Meditation I.

FIRST POINT.—God being the First Cause, infinite, eternal, it follows of necessity that there can be only one God, and such was the original revelation: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (*Gen.* i. 1). The worship of one God was transmitted by Adam to his children; yet they soon fell away into all kinds of shameful idolatry, worshiping the sun, moon, and stars, the beasts of the earth, even the works of their own hands. In consequence of their wickedness the whole race was destroyed by the Flood, Noe and his family alone being saved. But Noe's descendants fell away in like manner. Thereupon God chose one people, the children of Abraham, to preserve the true faith in the midst of an idolatrous world.

Even now in this twentieth century of the Christian era the greater part of the human race is steeped in idolatry. I, by God's mercy, believe in Him, worship Him alone; but how can I think of the darkness of the heathen without feeling an earnest desire to bring them to the light? With all my heart, then, I will beseech the good Lord to make Himself known to them and, as it is His design to save men by means of their fellow men, "to send forth laborers into His harvest"; for "the harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few" (*Matt. ix. 37-38*).

SECOND POINT.—Yet, though One in essence, God is Three in person. This, too, was revealed from the beginning, though not so clearly as the unity of God. For the Israelites, surrounded as they were by pagan nations, each with its own false idols, the oneness of God was the vital truth. Still, in the Old Testament there are many indications of the Holy Trinity. "Let *us* make man to *our* image and likeness" (*Gen. i. 26*). "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts" (*Is. vi. 6*). Three angels appeared to Abraham. "He saw three," writes St. Augustine, "and adored one," addressing them as "Lord."

Our Saviour's teaching, however, was clear and explicit. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit are the constant subject of His discourse. In the name of this Holy Trinity, Baptism was to be

given. He was to go to His Father, and the Father would send another comforter in His stead, the Holy Ghost. "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me" (*John* xv. 26).

THIRD POINT.—And so in Christ's Church Baptism is conferred in this Name, Confirmation is sealed with this seal, Marriage and Holy Orders are blessed with this blessing. In Penance, absolution is imparted in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. So Mass begins and ends. Holy Communion is given with the words: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting." "Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (*John* xvii. 3). And how are we to know Jesus Christ but through the Holy Ghost? "He shall give testimony of Me." The Last Anointing again is accompanied with the frequent invocation of the Holy Trinity, and at the very end it is in this Name the Christian soul is bidden to go forth from the body, while the one excuse Holy Church offers for us in that last hour is that, however we may have sinned through human frailty, we have "always firmly believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

No wonder, then, that among the many beautiful

images around us of this ever-blessed Trinity, such as the three primary colors which compose light, the three notes of the chord which produce harmony, the three members of the syllogism which constitute reasoning—the most perfect of all is the soul of man. Immaterial and indivisible, man's soul has three distinct powers—memory, understanding, and will, being thus three in one like God who made it.

Let me, then, consecrate my memory to God the Father, of whom I am constantly reminded by His visible creation; my understanding to God the Son, “the true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world” (*John* i. 9); my will to God the Holy Ghost, for “all holy desires, just counsels, and good works” come from the promptings of His grace, so that “no man can say, The Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 *Cor.* xii. 3).

Colloquy with the adorable Trinity. *The Creed.*

MEDITATION V

GOD IS GOOD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture, as in Meditation I.

Petition.—Love of God for His own sake.

FIRST POINT.—God is goodness itself and the

source of all created beauty. As the rays of light dart forth from the sun, as the waters well from the fountain-head, as the odor rises from the flower—so everything lovely and lovable comes forth from God, deriving all its beauty from Him and at every moment dependent on Him.

Under a curse though it is, brought on it by the disobedience of man, how entrancingly beautiful is the world we live in! Leave the dwellings of men behind you, get out into the open country, onto the boundless sea, and there, alone with Nature, you will realize what the good God meant this earth to be, how for our sakes He has filled it with good things, how even now, where the iniquities of men have not defiled it, it is still a veritable paradise. Yet, lovely as it is, there is nothing in it which can give lasting content to the craving heart of man. He was made for happiness, is always seeking it, but can never find it till he turns from God's creatures to God. Then at length he secures true peace and heart's ease; his hunger is allayed, his thirst is quenched. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever" (*John* iv. 13).

SECOND POINT.—And every creature around us was meant to serve as a stepping-stone whereby we might make our way to God; "for by the

greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby. . . . Let (men) know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they; for the first author of beauty made all these things" (*Wis.* xiii. 5, 3).

As man's intellect finds its proper object in the apprehension of truth, so is his heart irresistibly attracted to what is good and beautiful. How comes it, then, that, while rejoicing in the gift, he is so stolidly indifferent to the love of the giver? When some unknown benefactor has done me a kindness I want to meet him and thank him and give him my devoted friendship; yet I take what God gives me without a thought of Him, without feeling any desire to make such poor return as is in my power.

THIRD POINT.—And yet, in spite of all this coldness and ingratitude, God's beneficence never runs dry. He goes on dispensing His gifts however little they are appreciated. Even to those who forget Him entirely, to those who violate all His laws, He is still unwearied in His munificent kindness. He "maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad and raineth upon the just and unjust" (*Matt.* v. 45). I soon lost my interest in those that set no value on what I do for them; but God's goodness is unalterable. My affections veer and change; but He is always the same.

Henceforth I will set myself to repay love with love. Everything I have is God's gift; whatever I hope for here or hereafter must come from Him; yet, even were it not so, He deserves my love because He is so lovable; therefore, I will give Him all the devotion of my heart.

Colloquy with God infinitely good. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION VI

GOD IS MERCIFUL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—Your crucifix.

Petition.—The love of gratitude.

FIRST POINT.—“The Lord is gracious and merciful, patient and plenteous in mercy. The Lord is sweet to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works” (*Ps. cxliv. 8-9*). David is never weary of extolling God's mercies, and with good reason; for he had before his mind the sad history of his ungrateful nation, and he himself had grievously sinned.

Now, it is sin that has brought God's mercy into light. But for the sins of men the divine compassion would never have been known to us. Satan, when he revolted, knew nothing of it, did not conceive it possible that God should forgive.

He knew God's beauty, God's majesty, God's holiness far better than we do; but of His compassion he had had no experience; and Adam and Eve were much in the same case.

The rebel angels were not forgiven, for there was no excuse for them; yet there can be no doubt that God would pardon even Satan himself if he would but repent. Our first parents found mercy, and what a revelation it must have been to them! How little they could have foreseen that their sin might be condoned!

SECOND POINT.—In what are called the Parables of Mercy our divine Saviour has set before us under sweet and touching imagery the inexhaustible pity of His heavenly Father. The Good Samaritan, the Two Servants, the Good Shepherd, the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son all teach one and the same lesson; yet they are but imperfect images; they all fall short—how can they help it?—of the blessed truth of God's infinite compassion for poor fallen man.

The Israelites, His chosen people, were a type of the Christian soul. We know what He did for them and what He had to bear from them in return, how patient and long-suffering He was. He smote them, indeed, again and again, but only to bring them back to Himself. “Turn ye to Me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn to you” (*Zach.* i. 3). “Thou hast prostituted thyself to

many lovers. Nevertheless, return to Me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee" (*Jer.* iii. 1).

Such was the message He sent them by every one of His prophets; but all in vain. So Jesus wept over Jerusalem, because it had not known the time of its visitation nor the things that were to its peace. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not!" (*Matt.* xxiii. 37.)

THIRD POINT.—But Jesus Christ Himself is the crowning proof of God's mercy to mankind; for in Him it appears as literally infinite. He is the Son of the most high God, equal to His Father in every way, and yet He has been given by His Father and has given Himself as the victim for our sins. One drop of His blood, one sigh from His heart, would have been enough to redeem us all; for every smallest act of His was divine and, therefore, of priceless value. But what was enough in itself was not enough for His love; for "with Him there is plentiful redemption" (*Ps.* cxxix. 7). Nor is He even satisfied with dying for us. He must give us that sacred flesh, nailed for our sake on the cross, and that precious blood, poured out to the last drop, as our meat and drink in the Holy Eucharist. He must continue to the

end of time to be the companion of our exile, and so, while reigning glorious in heaven, contrives to dwell among His people, imprisoned in the Tabernacle, and to be offered up again, day after day, in the adorable sacrifice of the Mass.

Colloquy with God all merciful. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 293.

MEDITATION VII

GOD'S LIBERALITY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—The fairest scene in Nature your eyes ever rested on.

Petition.—A deep sense of God's generosity to you.

FIRST POINT.—“He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?” Such is St. Paul's argument, and the conclusion he draws from it is that nothing in heaven or on earth “shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (*Rom. viii. 32, 39*).

Think of God's munificence in the order of nature. In this world He has created for us, every need of man is provided for. “Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?

. . . For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things" (*Matt.* vi. 31, 32).

And He has thought not of our necessities only, but also of our delight, every sense being furnished abundantly with what may afford it gratification. From all eternity God has been thinking of each one of us. Every flower we have ever looked upon, every inanimate or living thing, every sight and sound and taste and odor that has ever given us innocent pleasure was designed from the beginning of creation for our sakes and meant to contribute to our happiness.

SECOND POINT.—Then, in the order of grace what a prodigal love appears! The Holy Ghost pouring out all His gifts; the Church, animated by Him, perpetuating the work of Christ on earth; her seven sacraments flowing forth from the foot of the cross into every corner of the world, each an inexhaustible fountain of the Precious Blood that redeemed us; the daily sacrifice of Holy Mass, not offered like those of old in one temple only, but on every altar in Christendom; the perpetual presence of Christ Himself in the Holy Eucharist, ever ready to receive, console, and strengthen us; the forgiveness of sin always ready to hand and on such easy conditions; and Holy Communion as often as we choose to ask for it. "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it?" (*Is.* v. 4.)

THIRD POINT.—The order of glory yet remains to be fulfilled in us. Into Christ's blessed kingdom the saints have entered, and among them many that we have known and loved. We live in hope that our day may come, when we shall bid good-bye forever to all the sorrows and miseries and imperfections of this earthly pilgrimage and be found worthy to enter into the joy of our Lord. "We are now the Sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is" (1 *John* iii. 2).

We know not what heaven is like; but, seeing what the good God has done for us already in time, we may well be content to leave our eternity in His keeping. He is the source of all that is good and desirable, and He has promised to give Himself to those that are faithful. "Fear not, Abram. I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great" (*Gen.* xv. 1).

Colloquy with the Giver of all good things. Te Deum, page 307.

MEDITATION VIII

GOD'S IMMENSITY AND PRESENCE EVERYWHERE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture as in Meditation VII.

Petition.—Constant remembrance of God's presence.

FIRST POINT.—God fills all this vast creation of His, the distances in which it baffles the mind of man to conceive; yet He is not contained within its limits, but dwells in infinite space on every side of it, so that the whole universe exists in Him like a sponge plunged in the ocean. "Heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain Thee" (3 *Kings* viii. 27). "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present; if I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also Thy hand shall lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me. And I said: Perhaps darkness shall cover me. . . . But darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be light as the day" (*Ps.* cxxxviii. 7).

SECOND POINT.—God by His presence within them gives being to all things; for conservation is but a continuance of creation. To some, such as air, water, and the planets, He imparts motion; to trees and plants, vegetable life and instinct; to birds, beasts, and fishes, etc., animal life and instinct; to man, all these together, and, in addition, intellect and free will.

So that wherever we turn we find God preserving all things, working in all things, without fa-

tigue indeed, yet with infinite love, giving color and symmetry and growth and motion and the power of reproduction to a countless host of living beings with which He has peopled the earth for our sakes. How, then, can we ever forget God? Everything around us has its message from Him; it is a Father's gift to His children. Alas! We accept the gift and forget the giver.

THIRD POINT.—All these creatures serve God, each doing what He created it to do. "Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil His word. Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, serpents and feathered fowls" (*Ps.* cxlviii. 8-10).

But man, being an intelligent and free agent, can serve the great God in a way all his own. And God dwells in him as in nothing else. He is, or ought to be, God's temple, or rather the holy of holies of this vast temple of the visible creation, set apart and solemnly consecrated to the worship of his Maker. In his soul the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving should never cease. The gift of speech marks him out as the corypheus or leader of that grand symphony of praise which is rising up day and night from the teeming world around him, a sweet song, but a song without words; he it is that should lend it articulate utterance. "I will bless the Lord at all times; His

praise shall be always in my mouth" (*Ps.* xxxiii. 1). "Come, let us praise the Lord with joy. Let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour; let us come before His presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise to Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all goods; for in His hand are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the mountains are His; for the sea is His, and He made it; and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us adore and fall down and weep before the Lord that made us" (*Ps.* xciv. 1-6).

Colloquy with God ever present. Te Deum, page 307.

MEDITATION IX

THE INFINITE KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM OF GOD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—The sky at night glittering with bright stars.

Petition.—Trust in God's wisdom.

FIRST POINT.—God knows everything, not only what exists, but also what might come into being, and that not in the vague, hazy way in which an artist thinks of a picture he may some day paint, but with full clearness and completeness; for all

possible forms of being are in the mind of God; He has only to will it and at once they spring into existence.

There is no past with Him, no future; for all things are to Him eternally present. "Behold, O Lord, Thou hast known all things, the last and those of old. Thou hast formed me, and hast laid Thy hand upon me. Thy knowledge is become wonderful to me; it is high, and I can not reach to it" (*Ps.* cxxxviii. 5-6). "Whence, then, cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding? It is hid from the eyes of all living; and the fowls of the air know it not. Destruction and death have said: with our ears we have heard the fame thereof. God understandeth the way of it, and He knoweth the place thereof; for He beholdeth the ends of the world and looketh on all things that are under heaven" (*Job.* xxviii. 20-24).

SECOND POINT.—All God's works tell of infinite wisdom. The nutritive and reproductive organs of plants, the circulation of the blood in animals, their nervous system, their whole organism—how admirable is it all! To Wallace the most wonderful thing in all nature was the wing of a bird, so marvelously devised for lightness, warmth, and strength; yet this is but one among countless similar devices of equal sagacity and beauty.

Men spend their whole lives in exploring one

little corner of this vast creation only to realize their own utter ignorance. The grasses, mosses, ferns, and other plants; the butterflies, beetles, birds, beasts, fishes, and reptiles are all grouped into thousands of different species, each with its own distinctive features, its own astounding adaptations to the place and mode of life intended for it.

Every kind of bird builds a nest differing from that of every other; nor do they learn their craft from their parents; it is implanted in them by the God who made them. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They labor not, neither do they spin; but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these" (*Matt.* vi. 28). "How great are Thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with Thy riches" (*Ps.* ciii. 24).

THIRD POINT.—In all His dealings with man God shows Himself infinitely wise. He has given him intelligence to know his duty and free will to do it; and this free will He never takes away, however much it may be abused. He helps him with His grace to overcome the concupiscence of his corrupt nature and waits for him with unwearied patience, sending him afflictions, indeed, but only to wean him from the dangerous love of this world, which attracts him as the flame attracts the moth;

for the one object of this good Father is to save His child from casting himself into eternal misery and to secure his lasting happiness.

Yet man will not trust himself to God's guidance. He thinks, poor fool, that he knows his own interests better and can take care of himself. He will put himself unreservedly in the hands of a physician and take cheerfully the remedies he prescribes, however unpleasant, for he holds bodily life and health to be worth any price; but of life and health eternal he reckons little.

For my part, I will leave myself in the care of the good God, who knows infinitely better than I do what is profitable to me. It would be folly, indeed, not to trust One who loves me so well. We trust our fellow men, not our tried friends only but even strangers—nay, the blind man trusts his dog; and shall not I have confidence in Thee, my God?

Colloquy with God infinitely wise. Act of Hope.

MEDITATION X

GOD OMNIPOTENT

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—The midnight sky glittering with bright stars.

Petition.—Humble and trustful submission to the Almighty.

FIRST POINT.—God's power is boundless as His wisdom. By His almighty word He called into being all things visible and invisible. "He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created" (*Ps.* 5). His power, being infinite, does not exhaust itself by action; what He has done He can do again, creating at His pleasure worlds ever more and more wonderful.

But this universe, imperfectly as we know it, is enough to convince us of the omnipotence of Him who made it. "Thou hast multiplied Thy wonderful works, O Lord my God, and in Thy thoughts there is no one like to Thee" (*Ps.* xxxix. 6). "Thou art great and dost wonderful things. Thou art God alone" (*Ps.* lxxxv. 10).

SECOND POINT.—With all His power, God is marvelously gentle and deliberate. He spent ages and ages in fashioning this earth for the habitation of man. Under our very eyes mighty and far-reaching changes are being brought about; yet how slowly! Rivers silt up or eat away their banks, the sea encroaches or retires, the hills crumble away. In the course of centuries the results will be seen, while the process that is bringing them to pass is hardly noticeable.

God is slow because He is eternal, gentle because He is almighty. And so in His dealings with men

we find the same patient tenderness and restraint. The bruised reed He does not break, the smoking flax He does not quench. How gentle and long-suffering has He been with me!

THIRD POINT.—Man, being endowed with a will of his own, possesses the awful power of resisting the will of the Almighty; but this he does at his own great peril; for his true happiness both here and hereafter is bound up in submission to that will. Whenever he refuses to obey his conscience he sets himself against God, for conscience is the voice of God. In this life he may defy His Maker; but not forever. The Almighty must prevail in the end.

What madness, then, to resist the irresistible! What madness to treat one's best friend as an enemy!

“Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation, casting all your care upon Him; for He hath care of you” (1 *Peter* v. 6-7).

Submission and confidence is my proper attitude, submission to God's power, confidence in God's kindness; for thus the divine omnipotence will be placed at my service. “He will do the will of them that fear Him” (*Psa.* cxliv. 19).

*Colloquy with my almighty Friend and Father.
Our Father.*

MEDITATION XI

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—God looking down upon you.

Petition.—Childlike trust in Him through good and evil.

FIRST POINT.—God's providence rules and guides all things. He has not flung this world of ours into space to take its chance; but all nature, from the highest to the lowest forms in it, is under His constant control, everything that happens being ordered for the divine glory and the ultimate good of His faithful servants. "We know that to them that love God all things work together unto good" (*Rom. viii. 28*). "Behold, He shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel. The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy protection upon thy right hand. The sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord keepeth thee from all evil" (*Ps. cxx. 4-7*). "There shall no evil come to thee; nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling; for He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (*Ps. xc. 10-11*).

Yet, to grasp this blessed truth demands a very deep faith; for God's action in this world is often

not at all what we should expect it to be, and we are confronted with many mysteries which at present we can only partially solve.

SECOND POINT.—We can not understand, for instance, why there should be so much evil and suffering in the world. We know, of course, that by his disobedience man has lost all right to the divine protection against physical calamities. Earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, and the like would have taken place even if man had not sinned; but God would then have given him wisdom to defend himself against them. But why are wicked men left so free to grind the poor, to corrupt the innocent, to persecute the Church?

Well, we must remember that God has given every man free will, which is never lost save when reason is unseated. He appeals to him through conscience and in other ways; but a man, if he choose, can steel his heart against every appeal. The balance will be adjusted some day; but now God lets the wicked have their way; it is their “hour and the power of darkness.”

Again, the sufferings of this life, no matter whence they come, bring home to us as nothing else can the wretchedness of our fallen state, the gravity of sin, the worthlessness of earthly happiness, and so make us long for that better land “where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest” (*Job. iii. 17*). Moreover, by

accepting these afflictions in atonement for our sins, we can purify our souls and shorten our purgation hereafter.

Lastly, it is only along the Way of the Cross that we can tread in our Master's footsteps and find Him in eternal joy. "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God" (*Acts* xiv. 21).

THIRD POINT.—A still greater and more distressing mystery is the existence of so much evil in ourselves. Our Saviour, we know, has compared the world to a wheat-field oversown by an enemy's hand with cockle; but it seems that our own hearts are oversown as well. So many good desires, so many spasmodic efforts and sacrifices, and yet, withal, so much sin and infidelity, that our lives seem to be a tissue of contradictions. "The good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do . . . unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (*Rom.* vii. 19, 24.)

Nevertheless, more than one advantage follows from this struggle of good and evil within us; for it teaches us to be very humble, very distrustful of ourselves, very earnest in entreating God's help and protection, and very alert and watchful; for, while we never know when we may be assaulted from without, we are always conscious of secret treachery going on within; so we must needs

watch and pray if we would not enter into temptation.

If we could cast out the traitor Concupiscence we should have nothing more to fear from the world or the devil; but then perhaps our zeal for holiness would cool down; we should fancy we had done enough, whereas “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away” (*Matt.* xi. 12). “Slay them not,” prayed David (that is, slay not the hostile tribesmen around us), “lest at any time my people forget” (*Ps.* lviii. 12). Were it not for the temptations that constantly assail us, how soon should we forget!

If our past sins and our present weaknesses only make us truly humble, this will more than outweigh all the harm we have suffered from them.

Colloquy with the “Keeper of Israel.” Act of Hope, or Psalm cxx, page 299.

MEDITATION XII

GOD’S PROVIDENCE SHOWN IN HEARING PRAYER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—God looking down upon you.

Petition.—The grace to pray well.

FIRST POINT.—Great indeed and very comforting are the promises made to prayer. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find;

knock, and it shall be opened to you" (*Matt.* vii. 7). "Amen, Amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in My name He will give it you. . . . Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (*John* xvi. 23, 24).

It would seem from this that one has only to ask in the name of Christ and he is sure of getting what he wants; yet common sense tells us that can not be the meaning intended. If it were, we Christians should ask for all the good things of life and get them, the hard and bitter things being left to those who had no faith; for when any affliction threatened us we should at once pray it away. It is evident, surely, that prayer is not meant to be simply an escape from suffering.

Mark, now, that little clause, "that your joy may be full"; for therein lies the explanation of Our Saviour's words. What joy is He thinking of? Eternal joy, of course. He binds Himself, therefore, to give us whatever will help us on our road to heaven. He will, indeed, hear and answer all our prayers; but if we make foolish petitions He will answer them in His own wise and fatherly way by giving us something better. If we let our children have everything they cried for we should soon see them in their graves, and if God were to grant us everything we ask of Him we should never rise to a better life.

SECOND POINT.—So much for the limitation of

this great promise; now for the conditions of prayer itself. These are four in number; viz., *faith, resignation, humility, and perseverance.*

We must pray with unlimited *faith* in the power and mercy of God. "Lord, if Thou wilt," cried the leper, "Thou canst make me clean"; and casting himself at our Saviour's feet he showed his belief that He had the will as well as the power.

We must pray with *resignation*, leaving the good God to answer at His own time and in His own way, being content with whatever He sends us. "Not my will but Thine be done."

We must pray with *humility*, acknowledging our own unworthiness—"O God, be merciful to me a sinner,"—and putting all our trust in the merits of our Redeemer. "Through Jesus Christ our Lord," says Holy Church at the end of all her collects.

We must pray with unwearied *constancy*. "Knock, and it shall be opened to you"; that is, go on knocking, like that importunate neighbor in the parable (*Luke xi. 5*), till the door of mercy is unbarred.

Lastly, we must never forget to return thanks, no matter in what way God answers our prayers—nay, even when they seem to be unanswered. Of His good will we can not doubt, and His divine wisdom is sure to choose what is best for our true happiness here and hereafter. So it is well di-

rectly we have finished a novena to begin to return thanks; for, whether we have got what we wanted or no, our prayer has certainly been heard and answered.

THIRD POINT.—“Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you” (*Matt.* vi. 33). Solomon, having prayed for wisdom, received every other good thing along with it; and we too, if, like good Christians, we leave ourselves in our heavenly Father’s hands and have no other wish but to please Him, shall most certainly have many temporal blessings poured out upon us. God will never send us a life wholly free from suffering, for that is not the way to heaven; but He will give us peace, that peace which surpasseth all understanding, leading through storm and sunshine to eternal joy. “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you” (*John* xiv. 27).

Colloquy with God the Father through Jesus Christ. Our Father.

MEDITATION XIII

OUR GUARDIAN ANGEL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Every child of Adam from his cradle

to his grave has a blessed spirit watching over him.

Mental Picture.—Your angel with folded wings standing at your side.

Petition.—A deep sense of God's fatherly love.

FIRST POINT.—“There shall no evil come to thee, nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling; for He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon” (*Ps. xc. 10-13*).

Hence it appears that so long as we are obedient to our heavenly guide we have nothing to fear from the evil one. These holy spirits keep us in all our ways; so it is clear that they never leave us; and yet they ever enjoy the vision of God. “See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven” (*Matt. xviii. 10*).

What a sweet and consoling truth is this, teaching us God's fatherly care for His children, our wondrous dignity, our perfect security so long as we are faithful on our side!

SECOND POINT.—Think what an angel is. A prince of God's court, by the excellence of his nature, his intelligence, power, beauty, and holiness

glorious beyond all words. "And I lifted up mine eyes and I saw; and behold, a man clothed in linen, and his loins were girded with the finest gold; and his body was like the chrysolite, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as a burning lamp" (*Dan.* x. 5).

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was on his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire" (*Apoc.* x. 1).

"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and coming rolled back the stone and sat upon it; and his countenance was as lightning and his raiment as snow; and for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror and became as dead men" (*Matt.* xxviii. 2).

"And, after I had heard and seen, I fell down to adore before the feet of the angel who showed me these things; and he said to me: See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant. . . . Adore God" (*Apoc.* xxii. 8-9).

Evidently St. John took this angel for the Son of God; and remember, he had seen Christ in glory on Mount Thabor.

Then, how dear to God are these blessed spirits! They were true to Him when others fell away; they fought for His glory; they gaze forever on His beauty.

THIRD POINT.—Who, then, am I to have an angel for my keeper? Ah, I see now what I am!

Vile and miserable as I seem to be, a beggar clothed in rags, this is but a disguise. I am a prince traveling incognito. Royal blood runs in my veins, the blood of the King of kings of whose sacraments I partake.

But oh, how I ought to love and reverence this dear angel of mine! How often to think of him and pray to him, how faithfully to obey him in all things! If ever he has the joy of carrying my soul to heaven I feel sure that the bond which binds him to me in this vale of tears will hold forever. Through all eternity there will be a mutual love unutterable in its strength and sweetness between the grateful soul and the blessed spirit who steered it through so many dangers to the haven of eternal rest.

Colloquy with your angel. Act of Hope, or Psalm xc, page 298.

MEDITATION XIV

HEAVENLY JOY

Preparatory Prayer, as above.

History.—Christ our Lord tells us that He has gone to prepare a place for us and that in His Father's house there are many mansions.

Mental Picture.—See the Holy Trinity and all the angels and saints looking down upon me.

Petition.—A great longing to be with God.

FIRST POINT.—Our conception of heaven is necessarily very vague; yet it is most important that it should be as clear as we can make it, and still more important that it should not be a false conception. Most Catholics, if asked what they imagine will be their employment when they get to heaven, will answer that they expect to spend their eternity in singing the praises of God; yet this is not a prospect that appeals profoundly to the human heart. Few of us yet love God with such an overmastering devotion as to render His praise of itself a sufficient incentive to prefer heaven to earth, and it is surely a question worth asking whether this can be an exhaustive account of what we may hope for hereafter; for if heaven is not conceived as desirable, it is pretty clear that men will not desire it. Indeed, we know it to be a fact that most men do not want to go to heaven a bit; even good Catholics are in no breathless hurry about it. May not this come from their thinking of heaven in the wrong way?

SECOND POINT.—What then is heavenly joy? The most concise definition of it we can look to find is contained in the Church's familiar prayer for her dead: "Eternal rest give to them, O Lord,

and let perpetual light shine upon them.” Eternal rest is the negative side of it, perpetual light the positive.

Of this latter St. Paul has written, quoting the prophet Isaias: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 *Cor.* ii. 9).

As we can not conceive it, we are obliged, if we would speak of it at all, to make use of earthly imagery, thrones and crowns and gleaming robes; and Holy Writ has taught us so to speak. Yet we know well enough that there are no such things in heaven, and if there were they would not make us happy. Do I really want to sit on a throne and wear a crown? Is that my idea of perfect contentment? Most certainly not; yet unless we use these images we must say nothing. Like angels’ wings, they bring something before the mind which, though not true, is, nevertheless, not false, because it is emblematical of what is true.

At the same time certain facts have been made known to us. We know that in heaven all our baser instincts will have disappeared, all our nobler faculties will be perfected. We shall be “as the angels of God” (*Matt.* xxii. 30), and we shall have the whole of God’s beautiful creation to revel in. We shall, indeed, forever sing God’s

praises; but this does not imply that we shall do nothing else. It means that our whole existence, full of delightful variety as God can make it, will be in itself a continuous hymn to His glory.

The greatest misery of hell, its essential torment, without which it would not be hell at all, is the loss of God, involving in itself the loss of joy and love and hope—everything, in a word, that can cheer the heart of man. In heaven, indeed, there will be no hope, for all hopes will be fulfilled; but love and joy will reign supreme.

In heaven there will be no misunderstandings; but heart to heart we shall love each other with an unalterable love, and God's love will be ever present to us, pervading everything. We shall have entered into the joy of our Lord; we shall be immersed in that joy, like a sponge in the sea or like the atmosphere saturated with light. No longer "through a glass, in a dark manner" (1 *Cor.* xiii. 12), but "face to face" we shall see our God and that forever and ever. This is the essential joy of heaven; this is what we can not conceive; yet we can believe the Apostle when he tells us that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us" (*Rom.* viii. 18).

The schoolboy going home is, perhaps, the most vivid image of eternal joy this earth of ours can offer. Escaping from the drudgery of the school-

room, he is going to have a jolly time, which his boyish fancy depicts as perfect, and, though in a few weeks it will be all over, he is able in his light-hearted way to put the end of it quite out of view, so that he can thoroughly enjoy himself.

THIRD POINT.—But now, if this positive aspect of heavenly bliss is at best a misty conception, the other we can fully appreciate. We have so close an acquaintance in this life with sorrow in all its forms that we can well realize what it means to be suddenly set free from it forever. We know how intense is the feeling of relief when some violent nervous pain is removed, how after a long spell of toothache is over we lie down to sleep like a child tired out with play.

Now if heaven meant nothing more than eternal rest; that is, lasting and conscious deliverance from all the ills of this weary pilgrimage, would it not even then be worth all that we are called on to pay down for it? But it means so much more than this; and if even on this earth the good can for a little space so flood our soul with joy, if an enchanting scene or a strain of exquisite music, or the sense of love returned can so melt our hearts as to make us forgetful of all life's troubles, how will it be, think you, when the Lord of heaven and earth, the Source of all love and all beauty, lays Himself out to make His creatures happy? May we not be sure that He knows how to do it? Oh,

in very truth "Eye hath not seen, etc." Eternal rest give to me, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon me.

Colloquy with the Eternal Beauty. Psalm xli, page 297, or De Profundis, page 290.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRIESTS

CONSIDERATION I

THE DIGNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD

1. "The law of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and in equity and turned many from iniquity. For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth; because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts" (*Malach. ii. 6*). These wonderful words were uttered of the priesthood of the Old Law; what, then, must the Christian priesthood be?

The Christian priest shares in the priesthood of Christ, the Son of God, offering, not sheep and oxen, but the body and blood of Christ, in the name of Christ, as He offered Himself on the cross, for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind, thus continually applying the merits of Christ's saving blood to those for whom He shed it.

2. In Christ's name, too, he forgives the sins

of his fellow men. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (*John* xx. 23). The priest by virtue of these words is appointed a judge in Israel, and God confirms his judgment in heaven. Here again and in all the other sacraments he applies to men the saving blood of their Redeemer.

3. He is also the authorized preacher of the Gospel of Christ, holding his commission from that Church to which the Son of God said: "Go ye and teach all nations." He is in very truth the angel or messenger of the Lord of hosts. Wherefore, "neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (1 *Tim.* iv. 14).

CONSIDERATION II

FAITH, HOPE, AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED IN THE PRIEST

1. FAITH. If it be true that faith is the very foundation of holiness, so that "the just man liveth by faith" (*Rom.* i. 17), can it be otherwise with the priest who, like St. Peter, has been chosen to confirm his brethren and, as their shepherd, to be the "pattern of the flock from the heart"? (1 *Pet.* v. 3.) The loftier the building the more solid must

be the foundation; the greater a man's responsibilities to God the deeper should be his faith in Him.

The priest, moreover, is the official expounder and defender of Christian truth and dogma. How can he fulfill this office unless his own loyalty to the Church's teachings is impregnable?

Let him see to it, then, that there be no taint of Modernism upon him, nor yet any craven fear lest the so-called Higher Criticism should undermine the traditional teaching of God's infallible Church.

2. HOPE. The priest should be a man of strong hope as well as a man of faith; for in his life there is plenty to discourage the faint of heart. Now, supernatural hope is nourished on prayer; can not live without it. By prayer we draw down God's blessing on our work, acknowledging our own insufficiency and helplessness; so the greater our difficulties the more earnest should be our prayer. "Power is made perfect in infirmity" (2 *Cor.* xii. 9). "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (*Philipp.* iv. 13).

3. KNOWLEDGE. A priest should not be satisfied with the learning acquired before ordination, but should be ever adding to his stock; he should be a studious man. There is a great stir nowadays in the realm of religious thought; all sorts of new

questions have to be grappled with; the old principles have to be applied to new exigencies, and the priest who is not a reading man and has grown rusty in his Dogma will often find himself in a sorry plight. Our Moral, too, is in daily request and, if not brushed up from time to time, is easily forgotten. As to Scripture and Church History, we can never know enough of them.

“Preach the word. Be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine; for there shall be a time [has not that time come?] when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. . . . But be thou vigilant; labor in all things; do the work of an evangelist; fulfil thy ministry” (2 *Tim.* iv. 2-5).

CONSIDERATION III

PRIESTLY CHARITY

1. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind and with thy whole strength” (*Mark* xii. 30). This command is laid upon every Christian; yet who can doubt that it binds the priest

more than all? He is the liegeman of Christ, sworn to His service with such solemn oaths, singled out for an office of such special trust.

“Lovest thou Me more than these?” asked our Lord of Peter. The same question He puts to every priest, and surely He has a right to expect a greater love of him. “Lord,” we answer, each one, “Thou knowest that I love Thee.” What follows then? “Feed My lambs” (*John* xxi. 15).

2. “Feed My lambs.” This is what Christ asks of us as a proof that the love we profess for Him is sincere. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The second commandment of charity is laid, like the first, on every one; but of the priest it is demanded in a more exalted degree—even to the utter sacrifice of self-love. He is no hireling. The sheep are his own; for the Good Shepherd has given them to him; and he must feed them and watch over them and be ready to lay down his life for them.

3. The true shepherd, then, will care for all his sheep. When they go astray he will seek for them and bring them back to the fold on his shoulders and rejoice over their recovery. He will know them all by name and they will know him. He will be a good shepherd to all alike, whether poor or rich, submissive or obstinate; but with a special attraction for the poor and the afflicted.

“The poor have the gospel preached to them”

(*Matt.* xi. 5). To this our Saviour appealed as a stronger evidence of His divine mission than the healing of the blind, the deaf, the lame, the leper, or even the raising of the dead.

CONSIDERATION IV

PRIESTLY HUMILITY

1. It is a strange thing that, being what he is, man's strongest and most universal tendency should be toward pride. We are God's creatures, absolutely dependent on Him for the very air we breathe. We are also sinful and rebellious creatures, begotten in sin, prone to evil. We know this well, and one would fancy it should be enough to keep our pride under; yet in spite of all we manage to think a mighty lot of ourselves.

Pride, we all know, will live on anything or nothing; the least semblance of elevation above others makes it thrive prodigiously. Now, priests are raised above their fellow men, are invested with great authority; to them, therefore, pride is a very real danger.

2. Yet the priest should of all men be the most humble. He holds the place of Christ; he should, therefore, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," (*Rom.* xiii. 14), being, like his divine Master, "meek and humble of heart."

It is the humble priest that wears away prejudice, the proud priest that intensifies it. The humble priest turns foes into friends; the proud priest makes foes of those best disposed to him. The humble priest converts sinners; the proud priest repels them. The humble priest gathers heretics into Christ's fold; the proud priest gives them a reason for stopping outside of it. The humble priest is happy in his vocation; the proud priest is unhappy himself and makes every one around him unhappy; for pride causes us to be suspicious and exacting, sets us against our superiors, breeds quarrels with our fellow priests, arouses ambition and sets every one against us.

3. A priest, therefore, should be humble in action. *Servus servorum Dei* in his office; he "is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (*Matt.* xx. 28). So he should be at every man's beck and call, never standing on his dignity, though never forgetting it, nor carrying his head, as the Spaniards say, like the Blessed Sacrament; but bending it low to every man's necessity, listening patiently to every tale of sorrow and sin, winning all to Christ by his gentle forbearance and sympathy.

And he should be humble in word. It is not becoming in a priest to be always scolding, to be harsh and caustic, to put the worst construction on everything, to refuse to accept excuses. He should

beware how he drives any one away; a hasty word may give him a lifetime of regret. "Come unto me" should be ever on his tongue. "Depart from me" never.

Lastly, he should be humble in thought, and, if he is so, all will be well; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things" (*Matt.* xii. 34). The priest who thinks little of himself will never be harsh or offensive in word or deed.

CONSIDERATION V

PRIESTLY PURITY

1. The monk is protected by his cloister; the missionary priest has to protect himself, and there are dangers on every side of him. "Brethren, be sober and watch; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith" (1 *Peter* v. 8-9). "Watch," says our Saviour again and again, "watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (*Matt.* xxvi. 41). Chastity is so grand a triumph over corrupt nature that nothing short of a singular grace can secure it for us. "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him" (*Wis.* viii. 21). Still, without watch-

ing, prayer will be ineffective. We have no right to look for miracles unless we do our part to deserve them.

2. We must watch, then, over our senses, especially sight and touch. These are the doors and windows of the soul. Double the guards, then, at these points, denying yourself sometimes even what is lawful, so as to keep temptation at a distance. God knows how easy it is to grow careless in these matters and how fearful the consequences may be. It was a look that ruined David and made him an adulterer and a murderer.

If we have ever lost our purity we must do penance; for, while the bloom on the grape when once rubbed off can never be restored, in the spiritual order restoration is always possible. So we find the Church in her Litanies placing Magdalen at the head of all the Virgins. She did heroic penance, and we must do the same; and the best and most salutary form of penance is a diligent control of our senses.

3. Ponder often on the beauty and profitableness of chastity. Its beauty we all know and feel; nothing attracts us so strongly. "It is known both with God and with men" (*Wis.* iv. 1). That is, is held precious and lovable on earth and in heaven.

Then, for its profitableness, we shall find that it confers health, strength, influence over others, and union with God. "A sound mind in a sound

body'' is the formula of physical health, ''a pure mind in a pure body'' of spiritual health, and the one follows on the other; for a chaste life unquestionably tends to physical well-being.

Then along with health comes strength.

''My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.''—*Sir Galahad*.

And power over others, because we are able to deal with them simply as immortal souls, paying no attention to external grace and beauty, nor to the absence of them. If we are not pure ourselves how can we hope to make others so?

Lastly, union with God. ''Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God'' (*Matt.* v. 8). Sir Galahad, in the beautiful old legend, was the only one of King Arthur's knights who was suffered to see the Sangrail.

CONSIDERATION VI

PUNCTUALITY

1. Punctuality is the soul of business. It is a natural virtue, being an essential element of the greater virtue, Justice, which requires us to fulfil our engagements. Unpunctuality, therefore, is not only unbusinesslike, but dishonest. Bad enough in a business man, in a priest it is graver

still. If Mass does not begin to the minute, busy people can not attend. Those who act as chaplains to convents ought to be the very pink of punctuality; for the poor sisters have imperative duties, such as teaching in schools often at a distance. Whatever happens, they *must* be punctual; and yet they are bound by their rule to hear Mass. Consequently, if they are kept waiting it means headache all day for them and ultimate breakdown.

2. Punctuality is a form not of justice only but of charity. It is often mere selfishness that makes men unpunctual. They will not hurry nor put themselves out for the sake of others.

It may also come from the fatal habit of putting off, leaving everything to the last minute, never beginning to do anything till it simply must be done. Then something unexpected is sure to happen, spoiling our calculations, and so we are too late. If we do not form the habit of leaving a margin, we shall be late in fifty per cent of our engagements. Really punctual men are always a little before their time, and they save others a world of trouble.

3. Never put off till to-morrow what can be done as well to-day, except when excited, abnormally depressed, or elated; for then it is best to call a halt. But when calm and collected, get through business; don't shelve it. Answer a business letter at once; make an entry before you forget it; pay a debt at

the first opportunity. Above all, break a bad habit and do a good deed without delay, or the one may grow too strong for you and the other may fall to some one else. Never put off what is for God's glory, the good of your own soul, or the soul of your neighbor. Time is passing into eternity, and grace, abundant now, will end with time.

CONSIDERATION VII

PRUDENCE

1. No man, least of all a priest, should act on impulse; for our first impulses, especially when we are excited, are almost sure to be wrong. Some characters, it is true, possess a large share of natural prudence, yet this can hardly be relied on in matters of grave moment, in spiritual affairs never; for there God's guidance is essential.

Some people seem to think that when they have said a Hail Mary they can go full-steam ahead, secure of God's help in what they are doing; but a man who really wishes to walk by God's light will take more pains than this to discover His will.

St. Ignatius has left us two Methods of Selection. To the first we may trust in smaller matters; in more important cases we should use the second, and in truth it is then wiser to make use of both.

2. The First Method is as follows:

252 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

a.—Set before yourself in definite terms the choice that lies before you, say between defending your good name or leaving it undefended.

b.—Bring yourself to a state of perfect indifference, so that you can say honestly that you have no other object but to find out what is for God's greater glory and your own eternal good.

c.—Pray earnestly that God may enlighten your understanding and move your will to what is best.

d.—Put these three questions to yourself: What counsel would I give to a fellow-priest who came to me with the very same case as my own? What would I wish to have done if I now lay dying? What would I wish to have done if I were on the point of appearing before Christ, my judge?

e.—You will then be able to come to a decision.

f.—Lay your decision before God, begging Him to confirm it if pleasing to Him, or, if not, to send you more light.

3. The Second Method:

a, b, and c as before.

d.—Take a sheet of paper and head it: "Reasons for and against defending myself." Then set down the reasons *pro* and *con* on opposite sides of the page. Having done this, turn your paper over and under the heading: "Reasons for and against *not* defending myself," set down your reasons as before. This change of aspect will often bring new considerations to light.

Remember that your reasons, to be valid, must not be prompted by self-love, but by love of God and salvation.

Then sit in judgment on the evidence, make your decision and offer it to God as before.

CONSIDERATION VIII

THE SPIRIT OF REVERENCE

1. God wants not servile but filial reverence.

Reverence of Thought. Our own souls and the souls of all men, however desecrated, are God's temple. With what veneration we should regard them if we remembered this!

Reverence of Speech; so that we never jest about holy things, never speak lightly of Holy Writ nor of the doctrines of the Faith, always defend the Church's action and are scrupulously careful of the good name of others, especially of priests.

Reverence of Action; for reverence, being an instinct of the human heart, manifests itself in ceremonial. That of the Church, therefore, is founded on nature as well as on the prescription of God in the Mosaic Law.

2. The central act of her worship is the Holy Mass, and she would have that great sacrifice offered very solemnly. A Low Mass, for the sake of the people, should never last much over the half-

hour; yet it should not fall far short of it. He who takes less than that is quick; he who takes notably less will soon become scandalous. Hurry is the very last thing the Church contemplates in her ritual, which is in truth a very school of stately politeness. She wishes every one engaged about her altar to be quiet, devout, and self-possessed.

3. Public prayers should be recited distinctly, with emphasis, and with evident devotion. Instead of saying them as though our main object was not to be understood, we should say them in such a way that the most inattentive listener may be forced to follow.

The Epistle and Gospel should be read slowly, clearly, and sympathetically; for, so read, they have an immense effect on a congregation. Unless their priest is reverent, the people will never be so.

The Sacraments should be administered devoutly, with prayer before and after, and, in the case of Baptism, washing of hands, according to the rubric, so as to show what value we set on these great means of salvation.

We should genuflect with deep reverence and be often seen in prayer before the Tabernacle.

In one word, a priest is known as "His Reverence" and should deserve the name.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR REGULARS

THE THREE VOWS OF RELIGION

CONSIDERATION I

THE EXCELLENCE OF THESE VOWS

1. He who enters a Religious Order renounces the world and consecrates himself entirely to God's service by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; thereby cutting away everything that can stand between him and Christian perfection. "For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 *John* ii. 16). The first of these is uprooted by the vow of chastity, the second by the vow of poverty, the third by the vow of obedience.

2. The nobility of these vows is proved from three considerations:

a.—They are made to the great God Himself and for His glory.

b.—They subject to Him our will, the highest faculty of our souls.

256 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

c.—They subject it irrevocably by the noblest of all moral acts; for every vow is a sacrifice and the vows of Religion a whole burnt offering, wherein nothing is reserved, but the whole man is consumed and annihilated.

3. They constitute the state of perfection, being the literal fulfilment of Our Saviour's counsels: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me" (*Matt* xix. 21). "There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take" (*Matt*. xix. 12). "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God" (*Mark* x. 14). "Whosoever will be the first among you shall be the servant of all; for the Son of man also is not come to be ministered unto but to minister" (*Mark* x. 44).

CONSIDERATION II

THEIR PROFITABLENESS

1. The deeper a tree strikes root the more vigorous and fruitful it becomes, and the same is true of the human will. Now, a vow makes the will firmer in its purpose and, while binding us, it does not

take away our liberty, because the free will with which we took it continues to make us faithful to it, so much so that if we were dispensed from our vows we would bind ourselves by them once more.

2. Man's blessedness consists in being united with God, and the vows of Religion bind us irrevocably to God. We are no longer our own masters; we have to take what is given us, to go where we are sent, to do what we are told. It is a complete surrender of all that is dearest to human nature.

And they bind God to us, so, unless we withdraw from our solemn engagement, we are sure of His most copious blessings. "I am the Lord that love judgment and hate robbery in a holocaust. And I will make their work in truth; and I will make a perpetual covenant with them. . . . All that shall see them shall know them, that these are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (*Is. lxi. 8*).

3. Good works done under vow are of greater merit before God than any others, and that for three reasons:

a.—Because they spring from a more intense loyalty.

b.—Because every act of virtue has not only the character of the virtue exercised, but is also an act of religion.

c.—Because every action thus performed be-

258 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

comes a sacrifice, which can be offered to God alone, being an acknowledgment that God is God, the Sovereign Lord of all things.

CONSIDERATION III

THE EXCELLENCE OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* v. 3). To be poor in spirit means to be free from all attachment to the good things of this life. A rich man may be poor in spirit; yet it is not easy to possess without clinging to one's possessions. The religious man, therefore, to make sure of poverty of spirit, becomes poor in fact, stripping himself of every possession, so that his heart may find nothing to cling to.

2. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (*Matt.* viii. 20). The Son of God, when He came down "to pitch His tent among us," chose a life of poverty, being "poor and in labors from His youth" (*Ps.* lxxxvii. 16). Can we do better than follow His example? "I am the Light of the world," He says, "He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (*John* viii. 12). Does not this imply the converse: He walketh in darkness that followeth Me not"?

Christ must be right; therefore, the world must be wrong in setting so much store on earthly riches.

3. The world marvels when it sees a man leave it and all it can offer to follow Christ; yet can earthly treasures ever satisfy the heart? The more your worldling gets the more he wants; he never finds real peace in his riches. But they who for Christ's sake have become poor are contented and at peace. Even on earth "*theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

CONSIDERATION IV

ITS PROFITABLENESS

1. The vow of poverty undermines pride and many other vices which are fed on wealth and power. It is a sovereign remedy and atonement for past sin. It frees a man from all solicitude over worldly matters. It sows the seed of temperance, modesty, and, above all, of humility. It detaches the heart from earthly interests, drawing it to those of heaven; "For we have not here a lasting city, but look for one that is to come" (*Heb.* xiii. 14). It is the path of Christian perfection pointed out by Christ Himself: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast."

2. To them who leave all for His sake, our Lord has promised a hundredfold even in this life. He reminds us of the care His Father has for the fowls

260 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

of the air and the lilies of the field and assures us that every hair on our heads is numbered. Our heavenly Father knows that we have need of food and raiment, and if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice all these things shall be added unto us (*Matt.* vi. 25-33).

“And the Lord said to Aaron: You shall possess nothing in their land, neither shall you have a portion among them. I am thy portion and inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel” (*Num.* xviii. 20).

3. In fulfilment of this promise everything needful is provided for us in the religious life, without any labor or anxiety on our part; so that we may justly be described as “Having nothing, and possessing all things” (2 *Cor.* vi. 10). When we travel elsewhere we find ourselves always welcomed in the houses of our Order. We are cared for in old age, lovingly tended in sickness, and prayed for after our death.

CONSIDERATION V

THE EXCELLENCE OF RELIGIOUS CHASTITY

1. By chastity man is, as far as may be, restored to that state of innocence from which his first parents fell, the flesh submitting to the spirit and every thought, word, and deed being under control.

It is known as the "angelical" virtue; for it does, indeed, render man like to the angels, seeing that the chaste live in the flesh the life of the spirit, and that not by the law of their being, but by a free act of their own will raising them through God's grace above nature.

2. Nay, it makes them like to God Himself, restoring in the human soul that image of the all-pure, the all-holy which was defiled and disfigured by sin. "You shall become as gods," said the lying tempter, "knowing good and evil" (*Gen.* iii. 5). The chaste man does know good and evil, but only to choose good and reject evil and that with the whole force of his will.

3. "I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it" (*Wis.* viii. 21). Chastity is in truth a divine gift and one of the highest God can confer. Save for His Virgin Mother, it was unheard of till Christ came on earth and, though He taught it both by word and example, nevertheless, seeing what a life-long and strenuous fight it demands against our animal nature, He would make no precept of it, but a counsel only: "He that can take, let him take."

CONSIDERATION VI

ITS PROFITABLENESS

1. The freedom it brings with it. "It is good for a man so to be," writes St. Paul. "I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided" (1 *Cor.* vii. 26, 32-33).

2. The peace of soul that follows; for, though carnal inclination and temptation may not altogether cease, it becomes easy to suppress them, the thought of our consecration to God acting as a strong check on all evil suggestions. A rider mounted on a vicious horse by means of curb and snaffle can force it to do his will; and in the same way the soul controls the body, gradually breaking it in, till it becomes quiet and docile.

3. The virtue it lends to all good works; for, says St. Gregory, "whereas chastity is of little worth without good works, good works without chastity are nothing" (*Gospel Homily* xviii).

And such is the common judgment of mankind. Every other failing they will excuse in a religious man, unchastity never; for cleanness of life is the

hall-mark of consecration to God's service. The unchaste monk is the worst of frauds.

CONSIDERATION VII

THE EXCELLENCE OF RELIGIOUS OBEDIENCE

1. Our Blessed Saviour's life on earth was one continuous act of obedience. "In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will" (*Ps.* xxxix. 8-9). He came, so He tells us, not to do his own will, but the will of His Father who sent Him, and "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (*Phil.* ii. 8). By our vow of obedience we bind ourselves to follow our King and leader in His absolute devotion to God's will.

2. With this object in view, we undertake three things, first, to fulfil to the letter every command laid upon us by our superior, with this sole reservation, that we are not told to do anything clearly against the law of God; secondly, to conform our will to his; thirdly, to subject our judgment to his judgment. Thus our whole being, body and soul, is sacrificed to the divine will, made known to us by the voice of him whom God has set over us.

3. This sacrifice of one's very self is most acceptable in the divine sight; "For obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams" (1 *Kings* xv. 22).

By the vow of Poverty a man renounces “all that he possesseth” (*Luke* xiv. 33); but by the vow of obedience he denies himself (*Matt.* xvi. 24). Now, “to give up what one has may after all be no very hard matter; but it calls for a huge effort to give up what one is” (St. Gregory, *Gospel Homily* xxxii). Therefore, says Solomon, “An obedient man shall speak of victory” (*Prov.* xxi. 28).

CONSIDERATION VIII

ITS PROFITABLENESS

1. By the vow of obedience the whole life, with all its thoughts, words, and actions, is consecrated to God’s service; every one of them, no matter how ordinary and indifferent in itself, taking on a new character and becoming meritorious of an eternal reward. We not only labor, study, preach, and write; but we eat, drink, and sleep under obedience; our whole lives, from morning till night, from night till morning, being a perpetual hymn of praise to the eternal God.

2. We are freed from all responsibility, our superior taking that off our shoulders. We have merely to do what we are told and we know that we are doing what God would have us do. We become for Christ’s sake like little children, and of such is the Kingdom of God” (*Mark* x. 14).

“And Jesus, calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them and said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven” (*Matt.* xviii. 2-4).

3. God has proved His love for obedience by the generosity wherewith He has always rewarded it. Abraham’s simple obedience was followed at once by the great promise to him and his seed. Adam’s disobedience brought ruin on the human race; all the miseries we suffer from now are the fruits of his fatal independence. But, “as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just” (*Rom.* v. 19).

The redemption of our fallen race is the reward of Christ’s obedience “even unto death.” “For which cause, God also hath exalted Him and given Him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father” (*Phil.* ii. 9).

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LAYMEN

CONSIDERATION I

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

1. HOLY MASS.—On your way to Mass think that you are going to Calvary to witness your Saviour's crucifixion.

Say the Confiteor with the server that, being sincerely contrite for your sins, you may be worthy to take part in the great sacrifice.

At the Gospel and again at the Creed remember that as a Christian you are bound to profess the Faith and if need be to die for it.

In Poland, from the old crusading days, every gentleman held his sword drawn during the reading of the Gospel, to show that he was ready to shed his blood for Christ.

Offer your own heart along with Christ's body and blood in worship of the divine Majesty, in thanksgiving for all His mercies, in atonement for your sins, to obtain whatever graces you stand in need of.

To avoid distractions, either follow the Mass in

your missal or meditate on the Passion or recite vocal prayers.

If you can not go to Communion, receive in spirit, uniting yourself with our Lord by faith, love, and desire. (See Instruction on Spiritual Communion, Vol. I, page 121.)

2. HOLY COMMUNION.—One communion perfectly received should be enough to make you a saint; why are you not one?

Do you approach the railing with a deep faith, a strong hope, a burning love, a profound sense of your own unworthiness? Devotion you can not always command; but the knowledge of your own misery and need of our Lord's help should stir in you a great desire, so that the oftener you receive the oftener you will wish to receive.

Having Christ in your breast, think of yourself as one of those poor sufferers whose maladies He healed when on earth. "Now is the acceptable time . . . now is the day of salvation" (2 *Cor.* vi. 2); for now you have within you that mighty God who can do all things, that all-wise Physician who cures every ailment, that truest and most faithful of friends who wishes you so well, that divine Lover who would speak with you heart to heart. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (*Acts* ix. 6). "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (1 *Kings* iii. 10). "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

268 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

3. DAILY VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.—Take care to set aside a time for this. If unable to go to the church, kneel down in your own chamber and worship from afar off; then He will come to you.

Most men forget His presence; take care you never do. Day and night He abides on the altar for your sake, ever thinking of you, pleading for you, blessing you. “Do this,” He says to His priests, “in remembrance of Me.” See how He longs to be kept in mind. “If I forget Thee, O Jesus, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws if I do not remember Thee, if I make not Christ Jesus the beginning of my joy.” (See *Ps.* cxxxvi. 5–6.)

CONSIDERATION II

EXAMEN AND SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION

1. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.—By calling ourselves to this daily account we anticipate that terrible reckoning at the hour of death. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 *Cor.* xi. 31). (For the practice of Examen see Vol. I, page 112.)

2. CONFESSION.—Do you come with faith and an earnest desire to wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb? Do you come from mere custom, or to

make yourself more pleasing in God's sight? Do you come carefully prepared and with deep sorrow for all past sin? Do you confess simply, without trying to spare yourself, to excuse yourself, to throw the blame on others? Do you honestly take measures to prevent your falling again? Are you sincerely sorry for venial sins? If you really love God you will be. A good son counts nothing little that gives pain to his father. Do you make an annual confession of all the sins committed during the year? There is no obligation to do this; but it is a most salutary custom.

3. Confession and after (Vol. I, page 117).

CONSIDERATION III

PRAYER, MENTAL AND VOCAL

1. MENTAL PRAYER.—Have you yet made any attempt to practise this holy exercise? The First Method of Prayer is explained on page 86 of Vol. I, the Second on page 26. These two lead easily to meditation, which is treated of at length at the beginning of the first volume; yet they are themselves most excellent and have the merit of being within the reach of every one. Resolve to make a beginning on Sundays at least.

2. THE ROSARY.—It is very easy to say the Rosary, but very difficult to say it well, the fre-

quent repetition of the same words causing the mind to wander. Put before your mind a sort of snap-shot of each Mystery, without attempting to follow out the whole history, and in presence of this picture repeat your Hail Marys.

The first part of the Hail Mary is a hymn of praise to the holy Virgin, the second an earnest petition for her help. Consequently, when saying the Rosary alone, it is very helpful to recite the first part of each Hail Mary in an audible whisper, the second under the breath. It is also a good plan to say one Pater and one Ave at the beginning of the Rosary after the Third Method of Prayer. (Page 27, Vol. I.) Having done this you will say the rest with far greater devotion.

3. OTHER PRAYERS.—Morning and Night Prayers should be as fervent as possible. When pressed for time in the morning or too sleepy at night take care that what you do say is said well.

Lest you should die in the night, always make an Act of Perfect Contrition before going to bed.

The custom of Family Prayer seems to be dying out; this is very regrettable. Our Catholic ancestors all through the days of persecution loved and cherished this holy custom. It is the mark of a truly Christian family, a declaration of its religious principles and a source of copious blessings.

Think of God frequently during the day, often invoke Our Lady and your guardian angel and

pray fervently for the spread of the Faith and the triumph of God's Church.

CONSIDERATION IV

READING, SERMONS, AND DIRECTION

1. SPIRITUAL READING.—Read daily for a quarter of an hour the Holy Scripture, the life of a saint, the Following of Christ or some other good book. Read thoughtfully, mingling your reading with prayer, and try to put in practice what appeals to you.

Try to learn all you can about the teachings of the faith, the history of the Church, the conversion of the heathen. The work of the Propagation of the Faith should interest every one who loves Jesus Christ. It is a bad sign to know and care nothing about such matters, for they are the interests of God in the world.

We should not only read ourselves, but try to spread good books and to prevent the circulation of bad ones.

2. SERMONS.—“Faith, then, cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (*Rom. x. 17*). Wonderful graces are attached to the hearing of the Gospel. The sermon may be simple, but the preacher is God's messenger, with authority to speak in the name of His Church; so we should

272 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

listen in no critical spirit, but with simple faith, believing that Christ Himself is speaking and praying that His words may profit us and all around us. It is when the preacher has left the pulpit that the sermon really begins; for we have then to put in practice what he has taught us.

3. DIRECTION.—With your spiritual director be perfectly open and straightforward. God helps him that he may help you; but if you deceive him by minimizing your faults, exaggerating your virtues, or hiding your temptations you will defeat God's merciful designs in your favor and take a tremendous responsibility on your soul.

Reverence your director; but don't be so dependent on him that you can not do without him. See the priest in him rather than the man.

CONSIDERATION V

CONDITION, DUTY, TIME

1. CONDITION.—Every one of us has a vocation from God. If you have never been so foolish as to take your helm out of His hands and to steer your own course, then you are in that condition of life which He designed for you and in which you can best save your soul.

Be content with your lot, whatever it may be. Neither envy those above you nor despise those

below. Whatever part you have to play on the stage of life, play it perfectly. The humblest often can do an immensity of good in the world and earn a surpassing reward in heaven by simply walking in that path marked out for him by God.

2. DUTY.—Every one of us has duties and obligations of the performance whereof we shall have to give an account. Let us spare no effort to fulfil these duties with the greatest exactness; for it is thus that we are to serve God and save our souls.

At the same time let not the spirit be so overloaded with the claims of duty as to find no leisure for communion with God—in prayer. We must “so pass through temporal things as not to lose those that are eternal.” (Collect, Third Sunday after Pentecost.)

3. TIME AND ITS USE.—No treasure is so precious, so fleeting, so easily squandered, so hard to recover as time; yet on our use of time depends our happiness for all eternity. We ought, therefore, to be jealous of our time, of every minute of it. Days are slipping into weeks, weeks into months, months into years, and every birthday is a milestone on the road to eternity.

Let everything, therefore, everything honest and good have its own share allotted to it. Work and play and prayer all have their claims. Settle those claims fairly and see that your decrees are observed, that work and play encroach neither on

274 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

prayer nor on each other, and that each in turn has all the energy thrown into it that you are capable of. "Do what you do" is the golden rule. Put your whole heart into everything you undertake; then you will use time well.

CONSIDERATION VI

SELF-RESTRAINT

1. A Christian should make it the object of his life to do all the good he may to those around him. With a view to this he should keep all his senses under control, for the body ought to be a reflex of the soul within it. The tongue, above all, should be always under guard and the words weighed before they are uttered. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; and a door round about my lips" (*Ps. cxl. 3*).

It is possible to be grave without sadness, quiet without dulness, familiar without levity, humble without servility. We should suit ourselves to our company, becoming so far as we may "all things to all men."

With servants we should be kind and considerate, never ordering them about like slaves, but thanking them for what they do for us.

2. In our pleasures, sports, and entertainments we should try to have a good intention and to keep

them within due limits. They are necessary and useful in their degree; but they are not the end of life; we were made for something better.

Never tolerate slanderous or improper conversation at your own table and, wherever you are, either divert it or show your disapproval at least by a grave silence.

Choose your own friends carefully and watch over the friendships of your children.

3. When you have any important matter in hand first commend it earnestly to God, wishing only to please Him and to save your soul, and beg Him to help you to a good decision. Then ask yourself what advice you would give to another who came to you with the very same case, what you will wish to have done when you lie on your deathbed, what you will wish to have done when you stand before Christ for judgment. After this make your decision and offer it to God, praying Him to confirm it or to send you more light on the subject.

CONSIDERATION VII

MORTIFICATION

1. Lay people often speak as if mortification was meant only for monks and nuns. This is a grievous mistake; nor is it Our Saviour's doctrine.

276 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

He says: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (*Matt.* xvi. 24). Every Christian, therefore, must practise mortification. Of this there are two kinds; viz., 1, what is of precept; 2, what is of counsel.

2. It is of precept that what leads to sin must be given up: "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out" (*Mark* ix. 46). Dangerous amusements, therefore, dangerous reading, dangerous friendships must be renounced; for one can not remain wilfully in the occasion of sin without being guilty before God.

It is of precept also to keep the fasts and abstinences prescribed by the Church. A good Catholic will never fail in these unless he has a dispensation or a very sufficient reason which satisfies his conscience; nor will he be too eager to ask for a dispensation, and when on good grounds he is exempted from the law he will try to do some other penance instead. "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (*Luke* xiii. 3).

3. But, over and above all this, mortification of the senses, of curiosity, of the love of pleasure is of so great profit to the soul that there can be no holiness without it.

Indeed, those who follow every natural impulse, putting no restraint upon themselves, can hardly in

any true sense be called followers of Christ. They may believe in His name; but they care so little for Him that they leave Him to carry the cross alone and will not so much as lift it with their little finger. So far are they from doing any penance that they fret over every small trouble, quite forgetful of their past sins and the good Jesus who died for them.

By God's grace it shall not be so with me. I will take up my cross daily, accepting thankfully every little vexation and disappointment that befalls me, and, like St. Paul, in some way or other, I will "chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps . . . I should become a cast-away" (1 *Cor.* ix. 27).

CONSIDERATION VIII

LOVE OF CHRIST AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

1. Our holiness may be most surely gauged by our personal love for Jesus Christ, for He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." And how are we to test our love for Him? By deeds rather than by words; "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (*John* xiv. 15).

What are we ready to bear for Jesus Christ? Does the love of Him cause us to forgive slights

278 CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETREAT

and injuries? Does it make us patient under our daily trials, thoughtful of others, forgetful of ourselves.

Words become proofs of love only when they have deeds behind them. Yet the love of Jesus has three consequences which also serve to measure our devotion to Him.

The first of these is the love of Mary, His Mother; for Mother and Son are so bound together that whatever we feel toward one we must needs feel toward the other. What sort of love, then, have we for the holy Virgin? Is it a love of mere sentiment, or does it show itself in self-sacrifice?

2. The second is love for His Church, that Church which He founded in His own blood, that Church to which He has made such magnificent promises, that Church of which St. Paul says: "Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (*Ephes. v. 25-27*); that Church which has suffered and still suffers such cruel persecution for His sake. Is this Church of Christ dear to our hearts? Do we regard all its interests as our own? Do we pray for it, defend it, fight for it? Are we

proud of belonging to it, never afraid to confess it? Deeds again must be the answer, not words.

3. The third is love for Christ's poor. Some people look upon the poor as a nuisance pure and simple, put them out of their thoughts, have as little to do with them as may be; but all the saints, like their divine Master, have loved the poor; counting it a privilege to serve them with their own hands, because they saw Christ in them, and no wonder; for has He not said: "I was hungry and you gave Me to eat," "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren you did it to Me"?

Kindness, then, of word and manner we owe to the poor for Christ's sake; yet this will not take the place of deeds; for, says St. James: "If a brother or sister be naked and want daily food, and one of you say to them: Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it profit?" (*James* ii. 15-16.)

PRAYERS AND HYMNS FOR COLLOQUIES

AD REGIAS AGNI DAPES

At the Lamb's royal banquet we
In gleaming robes to Christ, our King,
Fresh from His dear, dear blood's red sea,
Triumphant songs of welcome sing.

In truth divine He hath outpoured
From His own veins a loving-cup;
He, the great high priest of the Lord,
His own pure flesh hath offered up.

Angel of Death, go on thy way;
Our doors are purpled with His blood.
Make room for us, wild sea, and slay
Our foes with thine avenging flood.

Our Paschal Lamb this night is slain,
Our saving victim, Christ the Lord.
Our bread unleavened. Free of stain
Be thou who feedest at this board.

O sacred Victim, to Thy sway
The powers of hell perforce bow down;
The bonds of death are sent away
And won through Thee the heavenly crown.

Hail, conquering Christ, whose banner flies
Above the gloomy realms of sin!
Their prince enchained, Thy chariot hies
To open heaven and let us in.

Good Jesus, be for evermore
Our Paschal joy, that we may sing
A psalm of praise Thy throne before,
Where Death is known not nor its sting.

To God the Father glory be,
To God the Son who rose from death,
To God the Spirit, One in Three,
While age on age continueth.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

ALMA REDEMPTORIS

Mother of our Redeemer, kind of heart,
Wide-open gate to heaven, on life's sea
Our guiding star, help those who trust in thee
To breast the waves would swallow them. Thou
art
The wonder of the world, giving Him birth
Of whom thou hast thy being. Virgin thou
Before and after, take from Gabriel now
His Ave and befriend our sinful Earth.

IN ADVENT

V. The angel of the Lord brought word to Mary.
R. And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.

Let us pray

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

AFTER ADVENT

V. After childbirth, O Virgin, thou wert a maiden still.
R. O Mother of God, intercede for us.

Let us pray

O God, who by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary hast given to mankind the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be comforted by her intercession, through whom we have deserved to receive the Author of life, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Amen.

ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within Thy wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be torn from Thee.
From the wicked foe defend me.
At the hour of my death call me,
And bid me come to Thee;
That with Thy saints I may praise Thee
For ever and ever.

Amen.

I. Indulgence of 300 days, every time. II. Indulgence of seven years, if said after communion. III. Plenary indulgence, once a month.—PIUS IX, January 9, 1854.

ANIMA CHRISTI

Cardinal Newman's Translation

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification!
Body of Christ, be my salvation!
Blood of Christ, fill all my veins!
Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains!
Passion of Christ, my comfort be!
O good Jesu, listen to me!
In Thy wounds I fain would hide!
Ne'er to be parted from Thy side!
Guard me should the foe assail me.
Call me, when my life shall fail me,
Bid me come to Thee above
With Thy saints to sing Thy love,
World without end. Amen.

DIES IRAE

Day of wrath! That rueful day,
David and the Sybil say,
Shall the world in ruin lay.

How great fear on men will fall
When the almighty Judge of all
For a strict account shall call!

That Last Trump with dreadful groan,
Through entomb-ed nations blown,
Summons all before His throne.

Death and Nature then will quake,
When from their long slumber wake
Hapless men, reply to make.

In yon Doomsday Book contained
Lies the Law by God ordained
Whereon Man must be arraigned.

When our Judge is seated, lo!
Deeds of darkness all will know;
Nothing unavenged shall go.

How may I, poor wretch, endure,
Or of any aid be sure,
When the just feel not secure?

King of majesty divine,
Who so freely savest Thine,
Save me, Fount of love benign.

Jesus, kind, a weary way
Hast Thou sought Thy sheep astray;
Let me not be lost that day.

Faint with Thy long travail, nailed
On the Cross—can all have failed?
So great labor naught availed?

Thou whose vengeance wields the sword,
Ere that day by Thine award
Me reprieve, most upright Lord.

How should tears defend my case,
While my guilt is in my face?
Grant, O God, Thy pitying grace.

Mercy Mary found in Thee
And the thief on Calvary;
Is there, then, no hope for me?

All unworthy though my prayer,
Far too kind art Thou to bear
I should endless torment share.

Let me with Thy sheep abide;
From the goats my lot divide,
Setting me on Thy right side.

When lost souls become the prey
Of those flames that burn away,
With the blessed bid me stay.

Crushed with grief, I lay me here,
Charred to cinders in my fear.
Lord, in that dark hour draw near.

Wild, wild woe will greet that day,
When man, rising from his clay,
Guilty at Thy bar shall plead
Mercy, God, on Adam's seed!

Good Lord Jesus, unto them
Who love Thee give requiem. Amen.

EN EGO

O good and sweetest Jesus, before Thy face I humbly kneel, and with the greatest fervor of spirit I pray and beseech Thee to vouchsafe to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, true contrition for my sins, and a most firm purpose of amendment; whilst I contemplate with great sorrow and affection Thy five wounds, and ponder them over in my mind, having before my eyes the words which, long ago, David the prophet spoke in Thy own person concerning Thee, my Jesus: They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones. (*Ps. xxi, 17, 18.*)

His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, July 31, 1858, following the decrees already issued by his predecessors, confirmed anew the plenary indulgence granted by Clement VIII and Benedict XIV, and confirmed by Pius VII and Leo XII, to those who shall say this prayer. He declared, moreover, that those who wish to gain this plenary indulgence, must say this prayer with devotion before an image or picture of our crucified Redeemer; and, being truly penitent after confession and communion, spend some time in prayer for the intention of the Pope.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee; we bless

Thee; we adore Thee; we glorify Thee; we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers; who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou alone art holy; Thou alone art Lord; Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, art most high, with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

MAGNIFICAT

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour.

Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His Name.

And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.

He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.

He hath received Israel, His servant, being mindful of His mercy.

As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever. *Glory be to the Father, etc.*

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary! that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother! To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate! despise not my petitions, but, in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Indulgence of 300 days, every time; also a plenary indulgence, once a month, to all those, who having said it at least once a day for a month, on any day, being truly penitent, after confession and communion, shall visit a church or public oratory, and pray there, for some time, for the intention of His Holiness.—PIUS IX, Dec. 11, 1846.

DE PROFUNDIS

PSALM CXXIX

Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities; Lord, who shall stand it?

For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of Thy law, I have waited for Thee, O Lord.

My soul hath relied on His word: my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch even until night let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him plentiful redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

MISERERE

(Psalm L.)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity.

Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me.

To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee, that Thou mayst be justified in Thy words, and mayst overcome when Thou art judged.

For behold I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me.

For behold Thou hast loved truth. The uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest to me.

Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

To my hearing Thou shalt give joy and gladness; and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice.

Turn away Thy face from my sins; and blot out all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels.

Cast me not away from Thy face; and take not Thy holy spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and strengthen me with a perfect spirit.

I will teach the unjust Thy ways; and the wicked shall be converted to Thee.

Deliver me from blood, O God, Thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall extol Thy justice.

O Lord, Thou wilt open my lips; and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it; with burnt-offerings Thou wilt not be delighted.

A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a con-

trite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Deal favorably, O Lord, in Thy good will with Sion; that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.

Then shalt Thou accept the sacrifice of justice, oblations and whole-burnt offerings; then shall they lay calves upon Thine altar.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

O DEUS, EGO AMO TE

My God, I love Thee, not that I
May heavenly joy obtain thereby,
Nor that I know who love not Thee
Shall burn in hell eternally.
Thou, Thou, my Jesus, on the tree
With outspread arms hast compassed me
For me hast felt the nails, the spear,
For me hast suffered shame and fear,
And pains and torments manifold,
And sweat of blood from grief untold,
Nay, death itself—and all for me,
A sinner vile as vile can be.
Why, then, sweet Jesus, love not Thee,
Who art so loving unto me?
Not that I may Thy glory see,
Nor hell's eternal torment flee,
Nor any way rewarded be;
But only as Thou hast loved me,

So love I now and will love Thee,
Solely because Thou art my King,
My Lord, my God, my everything.

O HOLY JOSEPH

O Holy Joseph, father and protector of virgins, to whose faithful keeping Innocence itself, Christ Jesus and Mary, the Virgin of virgins, were committed; by these dearest pledges, Jesus and Mary, I beseech and conjure thee to preserve me from all impurity, that I may always serve Jesus and Mary in perfect chastity, with a mind unpolluted, a clean heart, and a chaste body. Amen.

PANGE LINGUA ¹

Sing, O my tongue, devoutly sing
That glorious body's mystery,
And that all-precious blood the King
Of nations hath outpoured, to free
Our world from a disastrous doom.
O blessed fruit of noblest womb!

On us bestowed, for us in birth
From a pure maid He would proceed,
And conversant with men on earth,
Till He had sown the Gospel seed,

¹ From the Primer of 1687, with sundry alterations.

Among them to prolong His stay,
His love invented this strange way.

He on that final supper night
With His dear brethren taking seat,
Observing all the ancient rite

Touching the Law's appointed meat,
Gave to the Twelve, a chosen band,
Himself for food with His own hand.

The Word made flesh by word of might
Turns to His flesh substantial bread,
Wine to His blood, while taste and sight,
Both failing, yet are not misled.
This to confirm in heart sincere,
There needs no more, if faith be clear.

Come, then, this Sacrament adore
And prostrate give the worship due;
And let the ancient rite no more
Have place, but yield unto the new.
Let faith in Jesus Christ supply
Of sense the insufficiency.

To Father and to Son outring
Triumphant praise and jubilee.
Their honor, power, and beauty sing:
Glory for all eternity
To them and to that Spirit bright
Who draws from both His endless light.

Amen.

PSALM XXV

Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my innocence : and I have put my trust in the Lord, and shall not be weakened.

Prove me, O Lord, and try me : burn my reins and my heart.

For Thy mercy is before my eyes ; and I am well pleased with Thy truth.

I have not sat with the council of vanity ; neither will I go in with the doers of unjust things.

I have hated the assembly of the malignant : and with the wicked I will not sit.

I will wash my hands among the innocent : and will compass Thy altar, O Lord.

That I may hear the voice of Thy praise : and tell of all Thy wondrous works.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house : and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked ; nor my life with bloody men :

In whose hands are iniquities : their right hand is filled with gifts.

But as for me, I have walked in my innocence : redeem me, and have mercy on me.

My foot hath stood in the direct way : in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PSALM XLI

As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.

My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?

My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?

These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me: for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God:

With the voice of joy and praise; the noise of one feasting.

Why art thou sad, O my soul? And why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

My soul is troubled within myself: therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan and Hermoniim, from the little hill.

Deep calleth on deep, at the noise of Thy flood-gates. All Thy heights and Thy billows have passed over me.

In the daytime the Lord hath commanded His mercy: and a canticle to Him in the night. With me is prayer to the God of my life.

I will say to God: Thou art my support. Why hast Thou forgotten me? And why go I mourning, whilst my enemy afflicteth me?

Whilst my bones are broken, my enemies who trouble me have reproached me; whilst they say to me day by day: Where is thy God?

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why dost thou disquiet me?

Hope thou in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PSALM XC

He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven.

He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector and my refuge: my God, in Him will I trust.

For He hath delivered me from the share of the hunters: and from the sharp word.

He will overshadow thee with His shoulders: and under His wings thou shalt trust.

His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night.

Of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark: of invasion, or of the noonday devil.

A thousand shall fall at Thy side, and ten thousand at Thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh Thee.

But Thou shalt consider with Thy eyes: and shalt see the reward of the wicked:

Because Thou, O Lord, art my hope: Thou hast made the Most High Thy refuge.

There shall no evil come to Thee: nor shall the scourge come near Thy dwelling.

For He hath given His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways.

In their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and Thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon.

Because He hoped in Me I will deliver him. I will protect him because he hath known My name.

He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him: I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him.

I will fill him with length of days: and I will show him My salvation.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PSALM CXX

I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me.

My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

May He not suffer thy foot to be moved: neither let Him slumber that keepeth thee.

Behold He shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel.

The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy protection upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not burn thee by day: nor the moon by night.

The Lord keepeth thee from all evil: may the Lord keep thy soul.

May the Lord keep thy coming in and thy going out: from henceforth now and for ever.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

SALVE REGINA

Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Almighty, everlasting God, who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst so make ready the body and soul of the glorious virgin mother, Mary, that she deserved to become a meet dwelling for Thy Son: grant that we, who rejoice in her memory, may by her loving intercession be delivered from the evils that hang over us, and from everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. May the divine assistance remain always with us.

R. Amen.

THE ANGELUS

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Hail Mary, etc.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, etc.

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc.

Let us pray

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the incar-

nation of Christ, Thy Son, by the message of an angel, so, by His passion and cross, we may be brought to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

REGINA COELI

O Queen of heaven, great joy to thee, Alleluia;
For Jesus Christ who deigned to be, Alleluia,
Thy child is risen as He said, Alleluia.
Pray bless all for whom He bled, Alleluia.
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia;
R. For the Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia.

Let us pray

O God, who didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

SLEEP, HOLY BABE

Sleep, Holy Babe!
Thine Angels watch around,
All bending low, with folded wings,
Before the Incarnate King of kings,
In reverent awe profound.

Sleep, Holy Babe!
While I with Mary gaze
In joy upon that face awhile;
Upon the loving infant smile
Which there divinely plays.

Sleep, Holy Babe!
Ah, take Thy brief repose.
Too quickly will Thy slumbers break,
And Thou to lengthened pains awake,
That death alone shall close.

Then must those hands
Which now so fair I see,
Those little pearly feet of Thine,
So soft, so delicately fine,
Be pierced and rent for me.

Then must that brow
Its thorny crown receive;
That cheek, more lovely than the rose,
Be drenched with blood and marred with
blows,
That I thereby may live.

O Lady blest!
Sweet Virgin, hear my cry.
Forgive the wrong that I have done
To thee in causing thy dear Son
Upon the cross to die.

STABAT MATER ¹

Under the world-redeeming tree
Stood Christ's dear Mother, silently
Mingling her tears with His red sea.

In His deep woe she bore her part,
Of all His wounds she felt the smart;
What pierced His body pierced her heart.

Full heavy and full sad was she
As thus she stood 'neath that rood tree;
Her child, her only child, was He.

With breaking heart she turns her eyes
Upon the Lord of earth and skies,
Where nailed upon the cross He dies.

Who is so hardened, who so cold,
As can with tearless eyes behold
This Mother's grief so manifold?

Can see her mourning with her Son,
Victim of deeds He hath not done,
And feel no pity? None, oh none.

For His own guilty race He bleeds,
All torn with scourges for their needs;
With His last breath for them He pleads.

¹ The ninth verse and two lines in the second are from the Primer of 1687.

Her well-beloved, uncomforted,
Bows down His weary thorn-crowned head,
And there she stands till He is dead.

All-loving Mother, teach my heart
Of sighs and tears the holy art,
That in thy grief I may have part.

With thy pure love my soul inflame,
That I thy Jesus' love may claim,
Who bore for me this bitter shame.

And grant me this, sweet Mother mine,
That sorrow on my heart may sign
The wounds of this dear Son of thine.

Share thou with me the cruel woe
Of every jibe and every blow
He shared with thee who loved me so.

Give me to weep sad tears as we
Stand side by side on Calvary,
Proving my life-long sympathy.

For all I ask is here to stay,
To be with Christ and thee alway,
To weep and weep, to pray and pray.

Virgin of virgins, turn not thou
In anger from my pleading now
When I my bitter grief avow.

To bear Christ's death about with me,
Like the good thief, with Him to be
Nailed on the cross is my one plea.

To share the blows that on Him fall,
Drink of His vinegar and gall—
Nay, His dear blood—this, this is all.

And on the great accounting-day
For thy poor child a good word say,
That then I be not cast away.

O Christ, when that last hour draws near;
For her sweet sake who loved Thee dear,
Give me a heart that knows no fear.

Though in the grave my body lie,
My soul, my soul shall never die,
But to Thy feet, dear Saviour, fly.

Amen.

SUME, DOMINE

Take, O Lord, and accept all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will, all that I am, all that I possess. All these things Thou hast given me, and to Thee, O Lord, I give them back again. They are all Thine own; do with them just what Thou pleasest. Give me Thy love and Thy grace; for this is all I need.

TE DEUM

We praise Thee, O God. We acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

Thee, the Father everlasting, all the earth doth worship.

To Thee all the angels, to Thee the heavens and all the powers,

To Thee the cherubim and seraphim cry out without ceasing:—

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.

Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of Thy glory.

Thee the glorious choir of the apostles,

Thee the admirable company of the prophets,

Thee the white-robed army of martyrs doth praise.

Thee the holy Church throughout the world doth confess.

The Father of incomprehensible majesty.

Thy adorable, true, and only Son,

And the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete.

Thou, O Christ, art the King of glory.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

Thou, having taken upon Thee to deliver man, didst not disdain the Virgin's womb.

Thou, having overcome the sting of death, hast opened to believers the kingdom of heaven.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.

Thou, we believe, art the Judge to come.

We beseech Thee, therefore, to help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance;

And govern them and exalt them for ever.

Day by day we bless Thee,

And we praise Thy Name for ever; yea, for ever and ever.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have trusted in Thee.

In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted; let me not be confounded for ever.

VENI, SANCTE SPIRITUS

Come, Holy Spirit, in Thy might;

Pour forth from heaven Thy cheering light,

To guide our wandering feet aright.

Come, Father of the friendless poor,
Giver of good gifts, come and cure
Our folly with Thy wisdom sure.

Best Comforter, right welcome guest,
Brood as the dove upon her nest
Here in our hearts and give them rest.

For rest to them that toil art Thou,
In noonday heat a shady bough,
And mirth upon the moody brow.

O ever-blessed Light, outpour
On those who trust Thee evermore
Thy gifts, Thy graces, as of yore.

Without Thy help there is in man
Nor force to think aright nor plan;
Evil is all he knows or can.

Wash Thou the filth of sin away,
Freshen once more our barren clay,
With healing grace our wounds allay.

Bend the hard will to what is true,
The cold heart warm, and pilot through
The drifting craft to waters blue.

Not in the spirit of the slave,
But with hope set beyond the grave
Thy seven choice gifts of Thee we crave.

High courage to Thy servants send,
Safe passage on the way we wend,
And heaven at our long journey's end.

Amen. Alleluia.

VEXILLA REGIS

Abroad the regal banners fly;
Gleams from the cross its mystery,
Whereon dear Life would death endure
And by His death our life secure.

Rent by a spear, our souls to lave,
His side wells forth a crimson wave;
Not crimson all, that mystic flood
Flowing as water after blood.

All the great prophet-king of old
Hath in his truthful song foretold
Is come to pass; for, lo, we see
God rule the nations from a tree.

Fair tree, whose foliage divine
Doth all in royal purple shine,
Chosen those sacred limbs to bear
That render thee so wondrous fair.

Fair tree, whose happy branches bore
The wealth that doth our world restore!

His precious body hung on thee
Who conquered hell and set us free.

Hail, Cross, of all our hope the spring!
While to our dead Lord's feet we cling,
By His dear love we humbly plead
For grace and pardon in our need.

AT EASTERTIDE

Hail, Cross, of all our hope the spring,
Sweet Easter joys awakening!
By Christ's dear love we humbly plead
For grace and pardon in our need.

Thee, mighty God, may all adore,
Life's fountainhead for ever more!
Cross-led through death's triumphal gate,
Be our reward exceeding great.

Amen.

VICTIMAE PASCHALI

To your Paschal Lamb this day,
Christians all, glad homage pay.
For the sheep the Lamb is slain,
Christ the innocent, to win
Lasting peace with God again
For a race defiled with sin.
Death hath closed in mortal strife
With the everlasting Life,

And the Lord of life in death
Liveth still and conquereth.
Tell us, Mary, on thy way
 What thou findest. I behold
That sad tomb wherein He lay
 And the cloth did Him enfold;
But of Him the angels say,
Gleaming with unearthly light,
He is risen in His might.
Christ, my hope, doth live and He
Waits you all in Galilee.
Yea, we know our King doth reign,
Never to taste death again.
None shall plead to Him in vain.
 Amen. Alleluia.

O SALUTARIS HOSTIA

O Saving Victim, opening wide
 The gate of heav'n to man below!
Our foes press on from every side;
 Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

To Thy great name be endless praise,
 Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
Oh, grant us endless length of days,
 In our true native land with Thee. Amen.

THE BENEDICTUS

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people;

And hath raised up a horn of salvation to us in the house of David His servant;

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who are from the beginning:

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.

To perform mercy to our fathers, and to remember His holy testament.

The oath which he swore to Abraham our father, that he would grant to us.

That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve Him without fear,

In holiness and justice before Him all our days.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways:

To give knowledge of salvation to His people, unto the remission of their sins;

Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.

To enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to direct our feet in the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PREPARATORY PRAYER

Grant us, O God our Lord, Thy grace, that all our intentions, actions, and operations may be ordained purely to the service and praise of Thy divine majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCHEMES FOR AN EIGHT DAYS' RETREAT

The Roman numerals indicate the volume, the Arabic figures
the page.

I

FIRST DAY

	PAGE
1. The End of Man	I, 41
2. Salvation	I, 43
3. The End of Creatures	I, 46

CONSIDERATION

4. Indifference	I, 48
---------------------------	-------

SECOND DAY

1. The Sin of the Angels	I, 51
2. The Sin of Our First Parents	I, 54
3. A Procession of Sins	I, 59

CONSIDERATION

4. "Remember, Man, That Thou Art Dust"	I, 69
---	-------

THIRD DAY

1. The Particular Judgment	I, 72
2. The General Judgment—III	I, 80
3. Hell	I, 83

CONSIDERATION

4. The Call of the King	I, 126
-----------------------------------	--------

FOURTH DAY

	PAGE
1. The Incarnation	I, 129
2. The World Redeemed	I, 133
3. The Birth of Christ	I, 161

CONSIDERATION

4. The Angels	I, 163
-------------------------	--------

FIFTH DAY

1. Jesus Lost and Found	I, 184
2. The Hidden Life	I, 188
3. The Temptations of Christ	I, 206

CONSIDERATION

4. The Two Standards	I, 208
--------------------------------	--------

SIXTH DAY

1. The Three Roads	I, 215
2. The Pearl of Price	I, 333
3. Lazarus	I, 322

CONSIDERATION

4. The Eating of the Paschal Lamb	II, 25
---	--------

SEVENTH DAY

1. The Institution of the Holy Eucharist	II, 36
2. Our Lord's Agony	II, 54
3. Peter's Fall	II, 65

CONSIDERATION

4. The Scourging	II, 83
----------------------------	--------

EIGHTH DAY

	PAGE
1. The Crowning with Thorns II,	84
2. Jesus Nailed on the Cross II,	96
3. The Three Solitudes II,	120

CONSIDERATION

4. The Resurrection	II, 128
-------------------------------	---------

II

FIRST DAY

1. The End of Man	I, 41
2. Salvation	I, 43
3. The End of Creatures	I, 46

CONSIDERATION

4. Indifference	I, 48
---------------------------	-------

SECOND DAY

1. The Sin of the Angels	I, 51
2. The Sin of Our First Parents I,	54
3. A Procession of Sins	I, 59

CONSIDERATION

4. Death	I, 65 or 68
--------------------	-------------

THIRD DAY

1. The Rich Man	I, 74
2. The Prodigal Son	I, 339 or 341
3. Hell	I, 83

CONSIDERATION

4. The Call of the King	I, 126
-----------------------------------	--------

FOURTH DAY

	PAGE
1. The Incarnation a Work of Love	I, 135
2. The Journey to Bethlehem	I, 159
3. The Birth of Christ	I, 161

CONSIDERATION

4. The Flight into Egypt	I, 180
------------------------------------	--------

FIFTH DAY

1. Jesus Lost and Found	I, 184
2. Christ's Fast in the Desert	I, 203
3. Christ Walking on the Sea	I, 262

CONSIDERATION

4. The Two Standards	I, 208
--------------------------------	--------

SIXTH DAY

1. The Three Roads	I, 215
2. Mary Magdalen	I, 274
3. The Lost Sheep	I, 336

CONSIDERATION

4. The Washing of the Feet	II, 28
--------------------------------------	--------

SEVENTH DAY

1. The Blood of Christ	II, 39
2. Christ's Prayer to His Father	II, 49
3. Our Lord's Agony	II, 54

CONSIDERATION

4. The Scourging	II, 83
----------------------------	--------

EIGHTH DAY

	PAGE
1. Ecce Homo	II, 87
2. The First Word from the Cross . . .	II, 102
3. The Second Word from the Cross . .	II, 104

CONSIDERATION

4. Christ and His Mother	II, 130
------------------------------------	---------

III

FIRST DAY

1. The End of Man	I, 41
2. Salvation	I, 43
3. The End of Creatures	I, 46

CONSIDERATION

4. Indifference	I, 48
---------------------------	-------

SECOND DAY

1. The Sin of the Angels	I, 51
2. The Sin of Our First Parents . . .	I, 54
3. A Procession of Sins	I, 59

CONSIDERATION

4. Who Is This That Sins?	I, 61
-------------------------------------	-------

THIRD DAY

1. Who Is Offended by Sin?	I, 62
2. Hell	I, 83
3. Purgatory	I, 122

CONSIDERATION

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| | PAGE |
| 4. The Call of the King | I, 126 |

FOURTH DAY

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. The Annunciation | I, 142 or 144 |
| 2. The Divine Conception | I, 147 |
| 3. The Birth of Christ | I, 161 |

CONSIDERATION

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 4. The Adoration of the Magi | I, 178 |
|--|--------|

FIFTH DAY

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Jesus Lost and Found | I, 184 |
| 2. The Two Standards | I, 208 |
| 3. The Three Roads | I, 215 |

CONSIDERATION

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 4. The Marriage in Cana of Galilee | I, 218 or 220 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|

SIXTH DAY

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. The Stilling of the Storm | I, 257 |
| 2. The Supper in Bethany | II, 20 |
| 3. Lessons of Humility | II, 33 |

CONSIDERATION

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 4. The Mystery of Faith | II, 41 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|

SEVENTH DAY

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Our Lord's Words After the Last Supper | II, 46 |
|---|--------|

	PAGE
2. Our Lord's Agony	II, 54
3. The Traitor	II, 59

CONSIDERATION

4. The Scourging	II, 83
----------------------------	--------

EIGHTH DAY

1. The Sentence of Death	II, 89
2. The Title on the Cross	II, 99
3. The Last Two Words	II, 112

CONSIDERATION

4. The Five Wounds of Christ	II, 146
--	---------

SCHEMES FOR A FOUR DAYS' RETREAT

I

FIRST DAY

	PAGE
1. The End of Man	I, 41
2. Salvation	I, 43
3. The End of Creatures	I, 46

CONSIDERATION

4. Indifference	I, 48
---------------------------	-------

SECOND DAY

1. The Sin of the Angels	I, 51
2. The Sin of Our First Parents	I, 54
3. A Procession of Sins	I, 59

CONSIDERATION

4. "Remember, Man, That Thou Art Dust"	I, 69
---	-------

THIRD DAY

1. The Particular Judgment	I, 72
2. Hell	I, 83
3. The Call of the King	I, 126

CONSIDERATION

4. The Birth of Christ	I, 161
----------------------------------	--------

FOURTH DAY

	PAGE
1. The Hidden Life	I, 188
2. The Two Standards	I, 208
3. Jesus Nailed on the Cross	II, 96

CONSIDERATION

4. The Resurrection	I, 128
-------------------------------	--------

II

FIRST DAY

1. The End of Man	I, 41
2. Salvation	I, 43
3. The End of Creatures	I, 46

CONSIDERATION

4. Indifference	I, 48
---------------------------	-------

SECOND DAY

1. A Procession of Sins	I, 59
2. Who Is This That Sins?	I, 61
3. Who Is Offended by Sin?	I, 62

CONSIDERATION

4. Death	I, 65 or 68
--------------------	-------------

THIRD DAY

1. Hell	I, 83
2. The Call of the King	I, 126
3. The Angels	I, 163

CONSIDERATION

4. The Two Standards	I, 208
--------------------------------	--------

FOURTH DAY

	PAGE
1. The Scourging	II, 83
2. The Crowning with Thorns	II, 84
3. The Third Word from the Cross	II, 106

CONSIDERATION

4. Christ and His Mother	II, 130
------------------------------------	---------

III

FIRST DAY

1. The End of Man	I, 41
2. Salvation	I, 43
3. The End of Creatures	I, 46

CONSIDERATION

4. Indifference	I, 48
---------------------------	-------

SECOND DAY

1. A Procession of Sins	I, 59
2. Damnation for One Sin	I, 58
3. General Judgment—III	I, 80

CONSIDERATION

4. Hell	I, 83
-------------------	-------

THIRD DAY

1. The Call of the King	I, 126
2. The Incarnation	I, 129
3. The Two Standards	I, 208

CONSIDERATION

4. The Three Roads	I, 215
------------------------------	--------

FOURTH DAY

	PAGE
1. The Institution of the Holy Eucharist . II,	36
2. The First Word from the Cross . . II,	102
3. The Second Word from the Cross . . II,	104

CONSIDERATION

4. The Third Word from the Cross . . II,	106
--	-----

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

The Roman numerals indicate the volume, the figures the page.

A

Absalom, II, 19.
 Absolution, sacramental, results of, I, 116.
 Active Life, the, I, 191.
 Adam and Eve, sin of, I, 54.
 Adoration, of the Magi, I, 178.
 "*Ad regias agni dapes*," I, 373; II, 281.
 Adulterous woman, the, I, 281.
 "*Agnus Dei*," I, 374; II, 282.
 Agony of Our Lord, in the Garden, II, 54.
 on the Cross, II, 96 et seq.
 Aids to prayer, I, 34.
 A Kempis, Thomas (quoted). I, 108, 120, 185, 240, 249; II, 16, 135, 180.
 "*Alma Redemptoris*," I, 375; II, 283.
 Ambition, an offspring of pride, I, 89.
 Ambrose, St. (quoted), I, 254; I, 267.
 Angel guardian, the, II, 231.
 Angel, strengthens Our Lord in the Garden, II, 56.
 Angels, at the nativity of Our Lord, I, 163.
 minister to Our Lord, I, 209.
 sin of the, I, 51.
 Angelus, the, I, 393; II, 301.
 Anger, of Our Saviour, I, 223.
 Anger, nature and punishment of, I, 96.
 "*Anima Christi*," I, 376; II, 284.
 Annas, Our Lord before, II, 62.
 Annunciation, the, I, 142, 144.
 Apostles, calling of the, I, 210.

Apostles—*continued*.

obedience of the, I, 211.
 contention among the, II, 34.
 prayed for by Christ, II, 50.
 awaiting the Holy Spirit, II, 159.
 desired by Satan, II, 34.
 Apostolic office, the, I, 241.
 Apparition of Christ by the lake, II, 148.
 on the mountain, II, 153.
 Arguments for the existence of God, II, 196.
 Aridity, during prayer, I, 35.
 "As the hart panteth" (Ps. xli), I, 389; II, 297.
 Ascension of Our Lord, II, 155.
 Assumption of Our Lady, II, 189.
 Attrition, sufficient for absolution, I, 117.
 Augustine, St. (quoted), I, 278; II, 91, 138.
 Avarice, nature and punishment of, I, 92.

B

Babe of Bethlehem, the, II, 15.
 Baltassar, King, judgment of, I, 75.
 Baptism, of Jesus, I, 200.
 Barabbas, II, 79.
 Barsabas, II, 158.
 Bartimaeus, healing of, I, 307.
 Beatitude, eternal, prayed for by Christ, for us, II, 51.
 Beatitudes, the eight, I, 225 et seq.
 Benedictus, the, I, 405; II, 313.
 Benevolence, love of, II, 195.

Bethany, the supper in, II, 20.
 Peter and John sent from, to
 prepare the Pasch in Je-
 rusalem, II, 25.
 Bethlehem, the journey to, I,
 159.
 Bethphage, coming of Christ
 to, II, 18.
 Betrayal of Jesus, II, 59.
 foretold by Him, II, 30.
 Birth of Christ, *see* Nativity.
 Blessed Eucharist, the, II,
 266.
 Blessed Sacrament, daily visit
 to, II, 268.
 Blessed Thomas More (quoted),
 II, 11.
 Blessed Virgin, the,
 election and conception of, I,
 137.
 relation of, to the Blessed
 Trinity, I, 138.
 privileges of, I, 139.
 birth and childhood of, I,
 140.
 the Annunciation, I, 142.
 the Visitation, I, 149.
 the Magnificat, I, 152.
 the Expectation, I, 157.
 the birth of Christ, I, 161.
 the Purification, I, 170.
 the prophecy of Simeon, I,
 173.
 adoration of the Magi, I,
 178.
 finding of Jesus in the tem-
 ple, I, 184.
 the life of, after the death of
 her Son, II, 184.
 the death of, II, 187.
 the assumption of, II, 189.
 devotion to, II, 192.
 Blood of Christ, the, II, 39.
 Boastfulness, an offspring of
 pride, I, 89.
 Bonaventure, St. (quoted), I,
 252.
 Burial, of Christ, II, 118.
 Buyers and sellers in the tem-
 ple, I, 222.

C

Cæsar, Julius, anecdote of, I,
 258.
 Call of the King, I, 126.
 Calling of the apostles, I, 210.
 Colloquy, the, explanation of,
 I, 14.
 Cana, the marriage in, I, 218,
 220.
 Canaan, the woman of, I, 287.
 Causality, argument from, as
 proof of the existence of
 God, II, 197.
 Cedron, *see* Kedron.
 Centurion's servant, the, heal-
 ing of, I, 290.
 Charity of the priest, II, 243.
 Charity, sins against, I, 104.
 Chastity, reward of, I, 95.
 Chastity, religious,
 the excellence of, II, 260.
 the profitableness of, II, 262.
 Christ, and His mother (after
 the Resurrection), II, 130.
 and Magdalen, at the sepul-
 chre, II, 134.
 and Peter, after the Resur-
 rection, II, 136.
 and Thomas, II, 143.
 apparition of, by the lake,
 II, 148; on the mountain,
 II, 153.
 meets the two disciples on
 the way to Emmaus, II,
 138.
 mocked and blindfolded, II,
 70.
 passion of, *see* Passion of
 Christ.
 the five wounds of, II, 146.
see also Our Lord.
 Christians, the early, II, 166.
 Christ's entry into Jerusalem,
 II, 17.
 Christ's glorified life, II, 124.
 Christ's Passion, II, 11-123.
 as a whole, II, 12.
 foretold by Him, II, 14.
see also Passion of Christ.

Church, the,
 founded on the rock—St.
 Peter, I, 267.
 shall be indestructible, I,
 267.
 Circumcision, of Our Lord, I,
 167; "of the heart," I,
 168.
 Clean of heart, the, I, 235.
 reward of, I, 236.
 Cockle, among the wheat, I,
 328.
 "Come, Holy Spirit," I, 400;
 II, 308.
 Coming of the Holy Ghost, II,
 163.
 Commandments, the ten, I,
 103.
 Commission of Christ to Peter,
 II, 157.
 Communion, Holy, II, 267.
 Communion, sacramental, I,
 118; spiritual, I, 121.
 Conception, the divine, I, 147.
 time of, I, 147.
 reasons for, I, 148.
 Condemnation of Jesus, II, 67.
 Condition in life, our, II, 272.
 Confession, II, 268.
 necessary qualities of, I, 117.
 sacramental, excellence of, I,
 115.
 Confidence, necessary for con-
 templation of the Passion,
 II, 11.
 Conformity, with the Divine
 will, obtained in the Uni-
 tative way, II, 125.
 Considerations for retreat, II,
 240-279.
 for priests, II, 240.
 for regulars, II, 255.
 for laymen, II, 266.
 Contemplation, explained, I,
 27.
 Contemplative life, I, 191.
 Contempt of others, an off-
 spring of pride, I, 89.
 Contention, among the apos-
 tles, II, 34.

Contrition; necessary for con-
 templation of the Passion,
 II, 11.
 Contrition, necessity of, I, 117.
 Conversion of St. Paul, II, 175,
 178.
 Counsel, II, 171.
 Covetousness, *see* Avarice.
 Creatures, submissiveness of, I,
 64.
 the end of, I, 46.
 Cross, Jesus nailed to the, II,
 96.
 title on the, II, 99.
 words from the, II, 102-115.
 way of the, II, 91, 94.
 Crowning with thorns, the, II,
 84.
 Crucifixion, method of, II, 97.

D

Damnation, how deserved, I,
 58.
 our own fault and not God's
 will, I, 85.
 David, II, 19.
 Dead, raising of the, I, 317 et
 seq.
 the daughter of Jairus, I,
 317.
 the widow's son, I, 320.
 Lazarus, I, 322.
 Death, a great teacher, I, 66.
 Christ sentenced to, II, 89.
 fear of, I, 66.
 life a preparation for, I, 65.
 of Our Lady, II, 187.
 of Our Lord on the cross, II,
 113.
 of St. John Baptist, I, 197.
 as it appears to the worldly
 man, I, 68.
 Demoniac, the, healing of, I,
 302.
 Demons, to be cast out by
 prayer and fasting, I, 316.
 Denial of Peter, II, 65.
 "De Profundis," I, 382; II,
 290.

Descent of Christ into hell, II, 126.
 Desert, fast of Christ in the, I, 203.
 Design, argument from, as proof of the existence of God, II, 198.
 Despair, of Judas, II, 72.
 Devils, the legion of, I, 302.
 Devotion to Our Lady, II, 192.
 "*Dies Irae*," I, 377; II, 285.
 Dignity of the priesthood, II, 240.
 Direction, spiritual, necessity of, II, 272.
 Disbelief in God's revelation, I, 104.
 Disciples, the, asleep in the Garden, II, 56.
 Distractions, during prayer, I, 36.
 "Dust thou art, etc.," I, 69.
 Duties, our, II, 273.

E

Early Christians, the, II, 166.
 Earnestness, necessary for contemplation of the Passion, II, 11.
 Earnestness, the reward of, I, 103.
 Eating of the Paschal Lamb, a symbol of Christ's suffering, II, 26.
 "Ecce Homo," II, 87.
 Egypt, the flight into, I, 180.
 Election of Mathias, II, 158.
 Emmaus, on the way to, II, 138.
 "*En Ego*," I, 380; II, 288.
 End of creatures, the, I, 46.
 End of man, I, 41.
 Entombment, of Christ, II, 118.
 Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem, II, 17.
 Envy, nature and punishment of, I, 100.
 Eternity of God, II, 201.

Eucharist, the, II, 266.
 institution of, II, 36-46.
 Examen, II, 268.
 Examination after meditation, I, 25.
 Examination of conscience, general, I, 112.
 particular, I, 113.
 Example of Our Lord, in poverty of spirit, I, 226.
 in meekness, I, 228.
 in mourning, I, 230.
 in thirsting for justice, I, 231.
 in mercy, I, 233.
 in cleanness of heart, I, 235.
 in peacemaking, I, 238.
 in suffering, I, 240.
 Excellence, of the religious vows, II, 255.
 of religious poverty, II, 258.
 of religious chastity, II, 260.
 of religious obedience, II, 263.
 Existence of God, the, proofs of, II, 196.
 Expectation of the Blessed Virgin, I, 157.
 Extraordinary prayer, I, 29.

F

Faith, of the centurion, I, 291.
 of St. Peter, I, 265.
 Faith, our, shown by reverence to the Holy Eucharist, II, 42.
 required in the priest, II, 241.
 sins against, I, 104.
 the mystery of, II, 41.
 Faithful, the, prayed for by Christ, II, 50.
 Falsehood, of the world, II, 19.
 False reformer, the marks of, I, 224.
 Fast of Christ in the desert, I, 203.
 Fatted calf, the, I, 342.
 Fear of the Lord, II, 172.

Feet, the washing of the, II, 28.
 Fickleness, of the world, II, 19.
 Fifth word on the cross, II, 110.
 First Method of Prayer, I, 86.
 First Parents, our, the sin of, I, 54.
 First word from the cross, II, 102.
 Fish, the miraculous draught of, II, 149.
 Five thousand, feeding of the, I, 259.
 Five wounds of Christ, II, 146.
 Fortitude, II, 171.
 Fourth word on the cross, II, 108.
 Frailties of human nature make us easy prey to Satan, I, 213.
 Francis of Sales, St. (quoted), I, 329.
 Free will, I, 111.
 Fruits of the Holy Ghost, the, II, 161.

G

Gethsemani, II, 53.
 Gifts of the Holy Ghost, II, 171.
 Ginhac, Rev. Paul. (quoted), I, 67.
 "*Gloria in excelsis*," I, 380; II, 288.
 Gluttony, nature and punishment of, I, 98.
 God, eternity of, II, 201.
 goodness of, I, 64; II, 208.
 immensity and omnipresence of, II, 216.
 infinite knowledge and wisdom of, II, 219.
 infinity of, II, 203.
 incomprehensibility of, II, 203.
 liberality of, II, 214.
 majesty of, I, 63.

God—*continued*.

 mercy of, II, 211.
 omnipotence of, II, 222.
 proofs of the existence of, II, 196.
 providence of, II, 225.
 trinity of, II, 205.
 wisdom of, I, 63.
 God, the Father, prayer of Christ to,
 after the Last Supper, II, 49.
 in the Garden, II, 53, 55.
 Godliness, or piety, II, 172.
 Goodness of God, II, 208.
 Good Samaritan, the, I, 344.
 Good thief, the, II, 104.
 Grace, the petition for, in colloquies, I, 15.
 Gratitude, love of, II, 196.
 Gregory, St. (quoted), I, 367.
 Growth of the seed, I, 331.
 Guardian angel, the, II, 231.

H

"Have mercy on me" (Ps. 1), I, 383; II, 291.
 "He that dwelleth" (Ps. xc), I, 390; II, 298.
 Hearing, how we sin by, I, 108.
 Hearing, spiritual, I, 30.
 Heart of Christ,
 agony of, on the cross, II, 109.
 Heaven, our happiness in, II, 234.
 Heavenly joy, II, 234.
 Hell, descent of Christ into, II, 126.
 how deserved, I, 58.
 pains of, I, 83.
 Herod, I, 254, 255.
 and the Magi, I, 176.
 and the flight into Egypt, I, 180.
 and the Holy Innocents, I, 182.
 Christ before, II, 77.
 Herodias, I, 254.

Hidden Life of Our Lord, I, 188.
 High priest, Christ before the, II, 64, 67.
 Holy Communion, II, 267.
 whom we receive, I, 119.
 who receives Him, I, 119.
 Holy Eucharist, II, 266.
 institution of, II, 36-46.
 Holy Family, the, at Nazareth, I, 188.
 Holy Ghost, the, awaited by
 the apostles, II, 159.
 coming of the, II, 163.
 workings of the, II, 168.
 gifts of the, II, 171.
 Holy Innocents, the, I, 182.
 Holy Mass,
 is a sacrifice, II, 44.
 is the same as the sacrifice
 of the cross, II, 44.
 Holy Name, the, I, 169.
 Holy Souls, the, I, 123.
 Honesty, with God, I, 217.
 Honor, our desire for, makes
 us easy prey to Satan, I,
 213.
 Hope required in the priest, II,
 241.
 Hope, sins against, I, 104.
 Humanity of Christ, the, reason
 for, I, 138.
 Humility, lessons of, at the
 Last Supper, II, 33.
 makes us like to Christ, I,
 214.
 of the priest, II, 245.
 of the publican, I, 356.
 of St. John Baptist, I,
 199.
 of the woman of Canaan, I,
 289.
 of Zacheus, I, 285.
 reasons for, I, 69.
 taught by Jesus, I, 274.
 the reward of, I, 91.
 Husbandmen, the wicked, I,
 360.
 Hypocrisy, an offspring of
 pride, I, 89.

I

"I have lifted up my eyes"
 (Ps. cxx), I, 391; II, 299.
 Idolatry, I, 104.
 Ignatius, St., methods of
 prayer, I, 26.
 methods of selection, II, 251.
 Illuminative way, the.
 meditations on, I, 126 et seq.
 explained, I, 18.
 Imagination, as a help to
 prayer, I, 24.
 Immensity of God, II, 216.
 Impurity, Our Lord's scourg-
 ing the penalty for, II, 84.
 Incarnation, the, I, 129.
 mercy of God in, I, 130.
 reasons for this method of
 redemption, I, 131.
 condition of the world at the
 time of, I, 132.
 condition of the world after,
 I, 133.
 a work of love, I, 135.
 Incomprehensibility of God, II,
 203.
 Indifference, I, 48.
 Infinity of God, II, 203.
 Institution of the Holy Eu-
 charist, II, 36-46.
 Instruction, for examination of
 conscience, I, 112.
 for confession, I, 117.
 Intellect, action of, in the uni-
 tative way, II, 124.
 use of, in prayer, I, 12.
 Intention, purity of, I, 242.

J

Jacob, the star of, I, 175.
 Jairus, daughter of, raised
 from the dead, I, 317.
 Jerusalem, entry of Christ
 into, II, 17.
 Peter and John prepare the
 pasch in, II, 25.
 Jesus, washes His apostles'
 feet, II, 28.

Jesus—continued
 foretells His betrayal, II, 30.
 sold by Judas, II, 23.
 Passion of, *see* Passion of Christ.
see also Christ, and Our Lord.
 John, St., visits Our Lady during the Passion, II, 71.
 John Baptist, St., I, 195.
 birth of, I, 154.
 death of, I, 254.
 John Chrysostom, St. (quoted), I, 345; II, 114.
 Joseph, St.,
 trial of, I, 155.
 flight into Egypt, I, 180.
 obedience of, I, 181.
 Joseph of Arimathea, II, 121.
 Joy, heavenly, II, 234.
 Joy in suffering, taught by Our Lord, II, 48.
 Judas, at the Last Supper, II, 31.
 at the supper in Bethany, II, 21.
 sells Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, II, 23.
 despair of, II, 72.
 "Judge me, O Lord" (Ps. xxv), I, 388; II, 296.
 Judging others, danger of, I, 282.
 Judgment, general,
 reasons for, I, 76.
 signs of, I, 77.
 uncertainty as to time of, I, 78.
 method of, I, 78-83.
 Judgment, particular,
 place of, I, 72.
 method of, I, 73.
 Justice, those that hunger and thirst after it, I, 231.

K

Kedron, II, 51.
 King, call of the, I, 126.
 Kingdom of God, not of this world, II, 101.

King's son, the, marriage of, I, 363.

Knowledge, II, 172.

Knowledge of God, II, 219.

Knowledge required in the priest, II, 241.

L

Laborers, the, I, 358.

Lake, the apparition of Christ by the, II, 148.

Lamb, the Paschal,

 eating of, II, 25.

Last Supper, the, II, 25-51.

 words of Our Lord after, II, 46.

Last things, the, I, 65.

Last two words on the cross, II, 112.

Laymen, considerations for, II, 266.

Lazarus (the beggar), I, 347.

Lazarus, the raising of, I, 322.

Leper, the, healing of, I, 299.

Leprosy a type of sin, I, 300.

Lessons of humility, at the Last Supper, II, 33.

Lessons taught by Our Lord after the Last Supper;

 love of Himself, II, 46.

 love of our neighbor, II, 47.

 patience and joy in suffering, II, 48.

Liberality of God, II, 214.

Liberality, reward of, I, 93.

Limbo, descent of Christ into, II, 126.

Lodolph of Saxony (quoted), I, 209.

Lord's Prayer, the, I, 243-254.

Loss, pain of, I, 84.

Lost sheep, the, I, 336.

Love of Christ and its consequences, II, 277.

Love of God, II, 46,

 love of benevolence, II, 195.

 love of gratitude, II, 196.

Love of God for us

 as shown in the Holy Eucharist, II, 38.

Love of God—*continued*.

as shown in the Incarnation,
I, 136.

Love of our neighbor, II, 47.

Lucifer, the revolt of, I, 52.

Lunatic boy, the, healing of, I,
314.

Lust, nature and punishment
of, I, 94.

M

Magdalen, Mary, I, 274.

sorrow of, I, 275.

at the supper in Bethany, II,
20.

at the sepulchre, II, 134.

Magi, faith of the, II, 42.

before Herod, I, 176.

adoration of, I, 178.

Magnificat, the, I, 150, 381;
II, 289.

Malchus, II, 61.

Mammon of iniquity, I, 354.

Man, the end of, I, 41.

why created, I, 42.

Marriage, in Cana, I, 218, 220.

Mary Magdalen, I, 274.

sorrow of, I, 275.

at the supper in Bethany, II,
20.

at the sepulchre, II, 134.

Mass, Holy, II, 266.

see also Holy Mass.

Mathias, the election of, II, 157.

Meditation, obstacles to, I, 21.

method of overcoming, I, 22.

the subject of, I, 17.

the time for, I, 32.

Meek, the, I, 227.

reward of the, I, 228.

Meekness, what it is, I, 228.

reward of, I, 97; I, 228.

"*Memorare*," the, I, 382; II, 290.

Memory, action of, in the uni-
tative way, II, 124.

exercise of, in prayer, I, 11.

to be used to remember God,
I, 109.

Mental prayer, II, 269.

Merciful, the, I, 233.

reward of, I, 234.

Mercy of God, II, 211.

Mercy, of Jesus, I, 281.

Mercy of Our Lord to the sick,
I, 287 et seq.

to sinners, I, 274 et seq.

Messias, the,

as expected by the Jews, I,
265, 272; II, 16.

Method, necessity of, in prayer,
I, 20.

Methods of prayer of St. Igna-
tius, I, 26, 86.

Methods of selection, of St. Ig-
natius, II, 251.

Miracles of Our Lord:

the miracle at Cana, I, 218-
222.

the stilling of the storm, I,
257.

the feeding of the five thou-
sand, I, 259.

the walking on the sea, I,
262.

the healing of the daughter
of the woman of Canaan,
I, 287.

the healing of the centu-
rion's servant, I, 290.

at the Probatica Pool, I, 296.

the healing of the leper, I,
299.

the healing of the demoniac,
I, 302.

the healing of the two blind
men of Jericho, I, 305.

the healing of the man born
blind, I, 308.

the healing of the paralytic,
I, 311.

the healing of the lunatic
boy, I, 314.

the raising of the daughter
of Jairus, I, 317.

the raising of the widow's
son, I, 320.

"*Miserere*," the (Ps. 1), I, 383;
II, 291.

Mixed Life, the, I, 194.

Moderation in action, I, 193.
 More, Blessed Thomas
 (quoted), II, 11.
 Mortal sin, damnation for one,
 I, 58.
 Mortification, II, 275.
 of St. John Baptist, I, 195.
 Mount of Olives, the, Our Lord
 goes to, II, 51.
 Mount Olivet, II, 155.
 Mountain, apparition of Christ
 on the, II, 153.
 Mourners, the, I, 229.
 reward of, I, 230.

N

Naim, the miracle at, I, 320.
 Nativity of Our Lord, I, 161.
 adoration of the shepherds
 at the, I, 166.
 angels at the, I, 163.
 Neighbor, love of our, II, 47.
 Nobility of the religious vows,
 II, 255.
 Nothingness of the sinner, I,
 61.

O

Oaths, as forbidden by second
 commandment, I, 104.
 Obedience, of Our Lady, I, 171.
 of St. Joseph, I, 181.
 of the apostles, I, 211.
 Obedience, religious,
 the excellence of, II, 263.
 the profitableness of, II, 264.
 Obstacles to prayer, I, 21.
 method of overcoming, I, 22.
 Obstinacy, an offspring of
 pride, I, 89.
 "O Deus, ego amo te," I, 385;
 II, 293.
 "O Holy Joseph," I, 386; II,
 294.
 Omnipotence of God, II, 222.
 Omnipresence of God, II, 216.
 One thing necessary, I, 194.

"O Salutaris Hostia," I, 404;
 II, 312.
 Our Lord, birth of, *see* Nativ-
 ity.
 circumcision of, I, 167.
 presentation of, I, 170.
 adoration of the Magi, I,
 178.
 finding in the temple, I, 184.
 hidden life at Nazareth, I,
 188.
 condemnation of, II, 67.
 miracles of, *see* Miracles of
 Our Lord.
 parables of, *see* Parables of
 Our Lord.
 passion of, *see* Passion of
 Our Lord.
 resurrection of, II, 128.
 "Out of the depths" (Ps.
 cxxxix), I, 382; II, 290.

P

Pain of loss, I, 84.
 Pain of sense, I, 83.
 Pain, suffered in hell, I, 83.
 "Pange Lingua," I, 386; II,
 294.
 Parables, of Our Lord:
 the sowing of the seed, I,
 325.
 the wheat and cockle, I, 328.
 the growth of the seed, I,
 331.
 the pearl of price, I, 333.
 the lost sheep, I, 336.
 the prodigal son, I, 339, 341.
 the good Samaritan, I, 344.
 the rich man and Lazarus, I,
 347.
 the unmerciful servant, I,
 350.
 the unjust steward, I, 353.
 the Pharisee and the publi-
 can, I, 355.
 the laborers, I, 358.
 the wicked husbandmen, I,
 360.
 the marriage of the King's
 son, I, 363.

- Parables of Our Lord—*cont'd.*
 the ten virgins, I, 366.
 the talents, I, 369.
 Paralytic, healing of the, I, 311.
 Particular examen, I, 113.
 Particular judgment, *see* Judgment, particular.
 Pasch, the,
 celebrated by Mary, II, 27.
 Jesus sold on the eve of, II, 24.
 Paschal Lamb, the,
 eating of, II, 25.
 Passion, the, II, 11-123.
 as a whole, II, 12.
 foretold by Our Lord, II, 14.
 Passion of Christ, the, II, 11-123.
 introduction, 11.
 Our Lord foretells His passion, 14.
 Christ's solemn entry into Jerusalem, 17.
 The supper in Bethany, 20.
 Jesus is sold, 23.
 Eating of the paschal lamb, 25.
 Washing of the feet, 28.
 Jesus foretells His betrayal, 30.
 Lessons of humility, 33.
 Institution of the Holy Eucharist, 36.
 Blood of Christ, 39.
 Mystery of Faith, 41.
 Holy Mass, 43.
 Our Lord's words after the last supper, 46.
 Christ's prayer to His Father, 49.
 Our Lord leaves the supper-chamber, 51.
 Our Lord's agony, 54.
 The sleeping disciples, 56.
 The traitor, 59.
 Our Lord before Annas, 62.
 Peter's fall, 65.
 The condemnation, 67.
 Passion of Christ—*continued.*
 Christ mocked and blindfolded, 70.
 Despair of Judas, 72.
 Christ before Pilate, 74.
 Christ before Herod, 77.
 Christ or Barabbas, 79.
 The scourging, 83.
 The crowning with thorns, 84.
 Ecce homo, 87.
 The sentence of death, 89.
 Way of the cross, 91, 94.
 Jesus nailed on the cross, 96.
 The title on the cross, 99.
 First word from the cross, 102.
 Second word from the cross, 104.
 Third word from the cross, 106.
 Fourth word from the cross, 108.
 Fifth word from the cross, 110.
 Last two words from the cross, 112.
 the piercing of Christ's side, 116.
 the entombment, 118.
 the three solitudes, 120.
 Passover, the, II, 26.
 Patience in suffering, taught by Our Lord.
 Patience, of God, II, 69.
 Paul, St.
 the conversion of, II, 175, 178.
 the spirit of, II, 181.
 Peace, to be obtained by detachment from this world's goods, I, 216.
 Peacemakers, the, I, 237.
 reward of, I, 238.
 Pearl of price, the, I, 333.
 Penance, the sacrament of, I, 114.
 fruits of, I, 116.
 institution of, II, 141.
 Pentecost, II, 163.

- Perfections and benefits of
 God, II, 195.
 Persecution, those that suffer,
 I, 239.
 Peter, St. and Christ, after the
 resurrection, II, 136.
 his attempt to walk upon
 the water, I, 264.
 his confession of faith, I,
 265.
 power of, I, 267.
 denies Christ, II, 65.
 self-confidence of, II, 52.
 prayed for by Christ, II, 34.
 receives the divine commis-
 sion, II, 151.
 Pharisee, the, and the publi-
 can, I, 355.
 Pharisees, the, II, 18.
 Piercing of Christ's side, II,
 116.
 Piety, II, 172.
 Pilate, Christ before, II, 74, 79,
 87, 89.
 Poor in spirit, the, I, 225.
 reward of, I, 227.
 Poor, the, II, 21.
 Poor Souls, the, I, 123.
 Poverty of spirit, necessary for
 humility, I, 214.
 Poverty, religious,
 the excellence of, II, 258.
 the profitableness of, II, 259.
 Power, of Christ, I, 257.
 in the Temple, I, 224.
 Power of God,
 as shown in the Holy Eu-
 charist, II, 37.
 Prayer, aids to, I, 34.
 external helps to, I, 24.
 extraordinary kinds of, I, 29.
 first method of, I, 86.
 mental and vocal, II, 269.
 mental, what it is, I, 11 et
 seq.
 methods of, of St. Ignatius, I,
 26.
 obstacles to, I, 21.
 method of overcoming, I,
 22.
 Prayer—*continued*.
 of Christ, in the mountain,
 I, 262.
 of Christ to His Father,
 after the Last Supper, II,
 49.
 in the Garden, II, 53, 55.
 on entering into, I, 20.
 reverence during, I, 21.
 second method of, I, 26, 243.
 the excellence of, I, 16.
 third method of, I, 27.
 the time for, I, 32.
 why God should hear our, I,
 12.
 Prayers and hymns for collo-
 quies, I, 373; II, 281.
 Preaching, of St. John Baptist,
 I, 196.
 Preparation for prayer, I, 20.
 Preparatory prayer, I, 406; II,
 314.
 Presence of God, realization of
 the, I, 20.
 Presence, the real, II, 36.
 Presentation of Our Lord, I,
 170.
 Pride, nature of, I, 88; other
 vices which spring from,
 I, 88.
 Pride, of the Pharisee, I, 356.
 Pride, the sin of Satan, I, 213.
 the nature of, I, 88.
 hateful to God, I, 213.
 punishment of, I, 90.
 Priest, the,
 faith, hope, and knowledge
 required in, II, 241.
 charity of, 243.
 Priesthood, the dignity of, II,
 240.
 Priestly charity, II, 243.
 Priestly humility, II, 245.
 Priestly purity, II, 247.
 Probatica Pool, the miracle at,
 I, 296.
 Prodigal son, the, I, 339, 341.
 Profitableness, of the religious
 vows, II, 256.
 of religious poverty, II, 259.

Profitableness—*continued*. . .
 of religious chastity, II, 262.
 of religious obedience, II, 264.
 Providence of God, II, 225.
 shown in hearing prayer, II, 228.
 Prudence, II, 251.
 Psalm, xxv., I, 388; II, 296.
 xli., I, 389; II, 297.
 l., I, 382; II, 290.
 xc., I, 390; II, 298.
 cxx., I, 391; II, 299.
 cxxix., I, 382; II, 290.
 Public Life of Our Lord, I, 191.
 Publican, the, and the Pharisee, I, 355.
 Punctuality, II, 249.
 Punishment, of pride, I, 90.
 of avarice, I, 92.
 of lust, I, 94.
 of anger, I, 96.
 of gluttony, I, 98.
 of envy, I, 100.
 of sloth, I, 102.
 of violation of the commandments, I, 106.
 of sins of the senses, I, 108.
 Purgative way, the,
 explanation of, I, 17.
 introduction, I, 39.
 fundamental meditations, I, 40 et seq.
 Purgatory, I, 122.
 Purification of the Blessed Virgin, I, 170.
 Purity, necessary for contemplation of the Passion, II, 11.
 Purity of conscience, method of acquiring, I, 86.
 Purity of intention, I, 242.
 Purity of the priest, II, 247.

R

Reading, spiritual, II, 271.
 Real Presence, the, II, 36.
 Reasons why God should hear our prayer, I, 12.

Reformer, the false, marks of, I, 224.
 the true, marks of, I, 224.
 Reformers, havoc of, in England, II, 37.
 "*Regina Coeli*," I, 394; II, 302.
 Regulars, considerations for, II, 255.
 Religious vows, the,
 excellence of, II, 255.
 nobility of, II, 255.
 profitableness of, II, 256.
 Remorse, of Judas, II, 72.
 Repentance, of Magdalen, I, 274.
 Reprobation, eternal, how deserved, I, 58.
 Resurrection, the, II, 128.
 Retreat, considerations for, II, 240-279.
 for priests, II, 240.
 for regulars, II, 255.
 for laymen, II, 266.
 Retreat, schemes for, II, 315-325.
 Reverence, during prayer, I, 21.
 Reverence, the spirit of, II, 253.
 Reward, of humility, I, 91.
 of poverty, I, 93.
 of chastity, I, 95.
 of meekness, I, 97.
 of temperance, I, 99.
 of brotherly love, I, 101.
 of earnestness, I, 103.
 of keeping the commandments, 106-107.
 of custody of the senses, I, 108.
 of the Holy Innocents, I, 184.
 of the obedience of the apostles, I, 211.
 of the poor in spirit, I, 227.
 of the meek, I, 228.
 of those that mourn, I, 230.
 of those that hunger and thirst after justice, I, 230.
 of the merciful, I, 234.
 of the clean of heart, I, 236.
 of the peacemakers, I, 238.

Reward—*continued.*

of those that suffer persecution for justice' sake, I, 240.

Rich man, the, and Lazarus, I, 347.

Riches, danger of, I, 74.

our love of, makes us easy prey to Satan, I, 213.

Roads, the three, I, 215.

Rosary, the, II, 269.

Rules for the practice of mental prayer, I, 34.

S

Salvation, I, 43.

"*Salve Regina*," I, 392; II, 300.

Samaritan, the good, I, 344.

Samaritan woman, the, I, 277.

Satan, desired to have the apostles, II, 34.

tempts Our Lord, I, 203, 206.

as leader of his forces, I, 212.

his methods of ensnaring men, I, 213.

his fear of the Blessed Virgin, I, 203.

Satisfaction, necessary for sacrament of penance, I, 118.

Scandal, as forbidden by fifth commandment, I, 105.

Schemes for retreats, II, 315-325.

Scourging, the, II, 83.

Second Method of Prayer, I, 243.

Seed, growth of the, I, 331.

sowing of the, I, 325.

Selection, methods of, of St. Ignatius, II, 251.

Self-restraint, II, 275.

Semei, II, 19.

Sense, pain of, in hell, I, 83.

Senses, the, as aids to prayer, I, 24.

the five, how we sin by, I, 107.

the five internal or spiritual, I, 29.

Sentence of Death, the, II, 89.

Sepulchre, Our Lord's, II, 118; II, 128.

the women at the, II, 131.

Sermon on the Mount, I, 225 et seq.

Sermons, the hearing of, II, 271.

Servant, the unmerciful, I, 350.

the unprofitable, I, 372.

Sheep, the lost, I, 336.

Shepherds, adoration of the, at the Nativity, I, 166.

Side of Christ, the piercing of, II, 116.

Sight, how we sin by, I, 107.

Sight, spiritual, I, 30.

Simeon, St., I, 171, 172.

prophecy of, I, 173.

Sin, as seen in others, I, 51.

in ourselves, I, 59.

of our first parents, I, 54.

of the angels, I, 51.

who is offended by it, I, 62.

Sinner, who he is, I, 61.

Sinners, Our Lord's mercy to, I, 274 et seq.

Sins, a procession of, I, 59.

the number of our, I, 60.

the seven deadly, figures of,

I, 87; meditations on, I, 88.

"Sleep, Holy Babe," I, 394; II, 302.

Sleeping disciples, the, in the Garden, II, 56.

Sloth, the nature and punishment of, I, 101-102.

Smell, how we sin by, I, 108.

Smell, spiritual, I, 31.

Solitudes, the three, II, 120.

Son, the prodigal, I, 339, 341.

Sons of Zebedee, I, 271.

Sorrow of Our Lady, at the temporary loss of Jesus, I, 185.

Sorrow, of Our Lord, in the Garden, II, 54.

Soul of Christ, I, 376; II, 284.

Soul, the, what it is to lose it, I, 44.

three powers of the, I, 109.

Sowing of the seed, I, 325.
 Spirit of reverence, the, II, 253.
 Spirit of St. Paul, the, II, 181.
 Spiritual reading, II, 271.
 Spiritual senses, the, I, 29.
 "*Stabat Mater*," I, 396; II, 304.
 Standards, the two, I, 212.
 Star, of Jacob, I, 175.
 Stephen, St. (the protomartyr), II, 173.
 Steward, the unjust, I, 353.
 Stilling of the storm, I, 257.
 "*Sume, Domine*," I, 398; II, 306.
 Supper in Bethany, the, II, 20.
 Sweat, of Our Lord, in the Garden, II, 55.
 Symbolism, of the paschal lamb, II, 26.

T

"Take, O Lord," I, 398; II, 306.
 Talents, the, I, 369.
 Taste, how we sin by, I, 108.
 Taste, spiritual, I, 31.
 Tears, while at prayer, I, 35.
 "*Te Deum*," I, 399; II, 307.
 Temperance, reward of, I, 99.
 Temple, finding of Jesus in the, I, 184.
 Temptation, of Our Lord, I, 203, 206.
 His preparation for, I, 205.
 Ten virgins, the, I, 366.
 Thief, the good, II, 104.
 Third word on the cross, the, II, 106.
 Thirst, of Our Lord on the cross, II, 111.
 Thomas, the doubter, II, 14.
 Thorns, the crowning with, II, 84.
 Three Roads, the (three classes of men), I, 215.
 Three solitudes, the, II, 120.
 Time for meditation, I, 32.

Time, value of, II, 273.
 Title on the cross, the, II, 99.
 Tongue, the, as a help to prayer, I, 24.
 Touch, how we sin by, I, 108.
 Traitor, the (Judas), II, 59.
 Transfiguration, the, I, 268.
 objects of, I, 268, 269.
 Trinity, the, II, 205.
 True reformer, the, marks of, I, 224.
 Twelve, Christ and the, II, 140.
 Two Standards, the, I, 212.

U

Understanding, II, 171.
 Understanding, to be used to know God, I, 110.
 Unjust steward, the, I, 353.
 Unitive way, the, II, 124.
 explained, I, 18.
 Unity, prayed for by Christ, II, 50.
 Unmerciful servant, the, I, 350.
 Unprofitable servant, the, I, 372.
 Unworldliness, difficult to attain, I, 225.

V

Vainglory, an offspring of pride, I, 88.
 "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*," I, 400; II, 308.
 Veronica, II, 94.
 "*Vexilla Regis*," I, 402; II, 310.
 "*Victimæ Paschali*," I, 403; II, 311.
 Vinegar, given to Our Lord on the cross, II, 110.
 Vineyard, the laborers in the, I, 358.
 Virgins, the ten, I, 366.
 Visit, daily, to the Blessed Sacrament, II, 268.
 Visitation, the, reasons for, I, 149; description of, I, 150.

Vocal prayer, II, 269.
Vows of religion, the three, II, 255.
 excellence of, II, 255.
 nobility of, II, 255.
 profitableness of, II, 256.

W

Washing of the feet, the, II, 28.
Way of the cross, II, 91, 94.
Weariness of Our Lord, in the Garden, II, 55.
Wedding-garment, the, I, 365.
Well of Jacob, the, Christ at, I, 277.
Wenceslaus, St., II, 22.
Wheat and cockle, the, I, 328.
Wicked husbandman, the, I, 360.
Widow's son, the, raising of, I, 320.
Wife of Pilate, II, 80.
Will, action of, in the unitive way, II, 124, 125.
 given to us to give God a free service, I, 111.
 use of, in prayer, I, 12.
Wisdom of God, II, 219.
 as shown in the Holy Eucharist, II, 36.
"Woman," as applied by Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin, I, 219.

Woman, of Canaan, I, 287.
 of Samaria, I, 277.
 with the issue of blood, I, 293.
 taken in adultery, the, I, 281.
Women, the, at the sepulchre, II, 131.
Words from the cross, II, 102-115.
 first, II, 102.
 second, II, 104.
 third, II, 106.
 fourth, II, 108.
 fifth, II, 110.
 last two, II, 112.
Words of Our Lord,
 after the last supper, II, 46.
Workings of the Holy Ghost, II, 168.
World, the, appeal of, I, 225, 226.
 falsehood of, II, 19.
 fickleness of, II, 19.
World (the human), as redeemed, I, 133.
Wounds, the five, of Christ, II, 146.

Z

Zacheus, I, 284.
 humility of, I, 285.
Zebedee, the sons of, I, 271.

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